

OF 1813

CAMPAIGN

M'CLURE *

BATH
1817

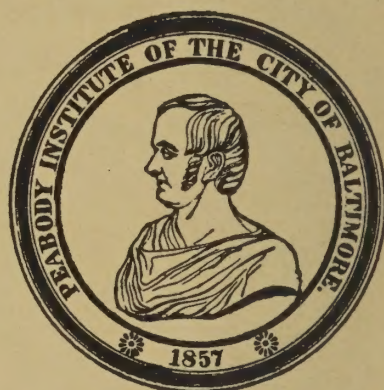




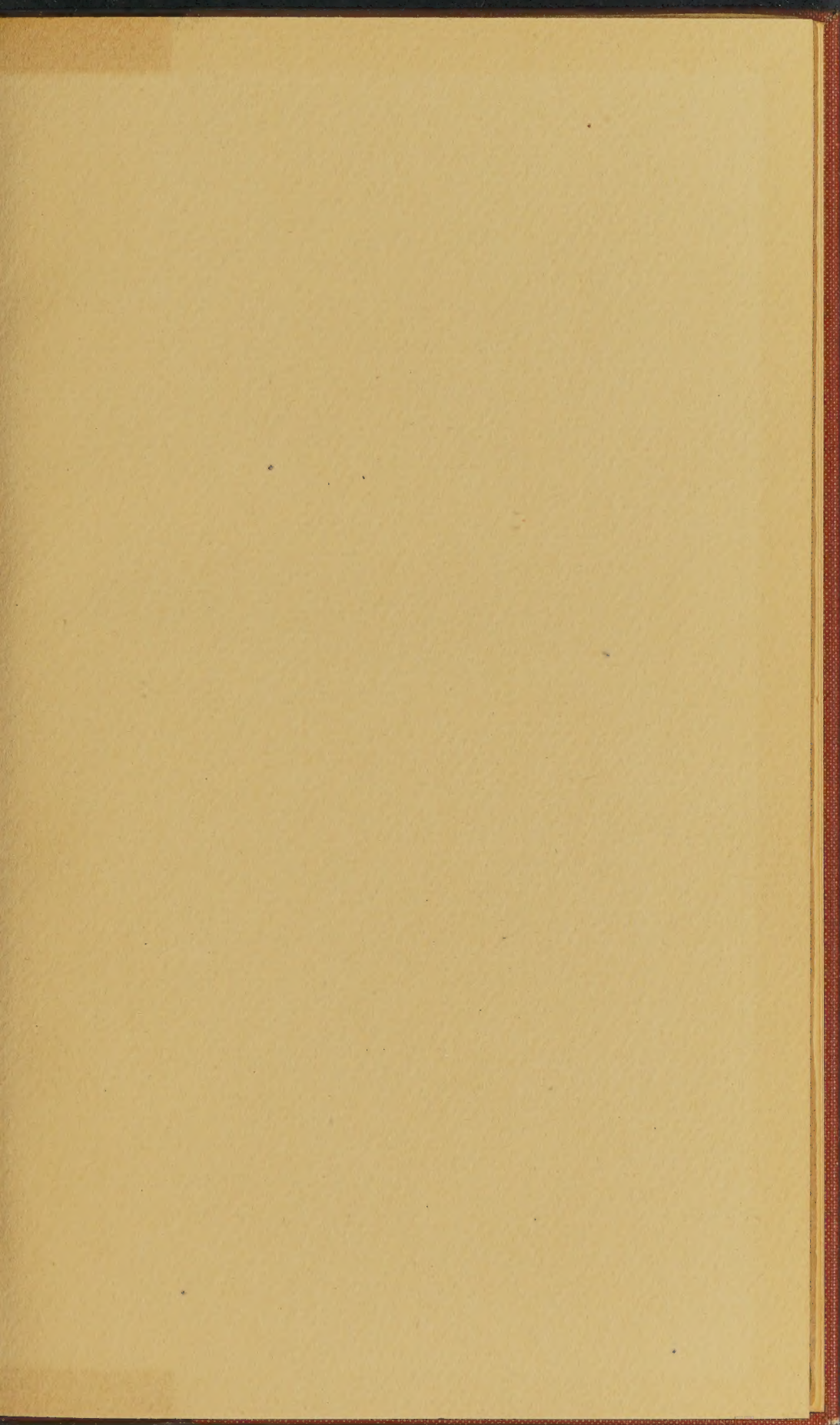


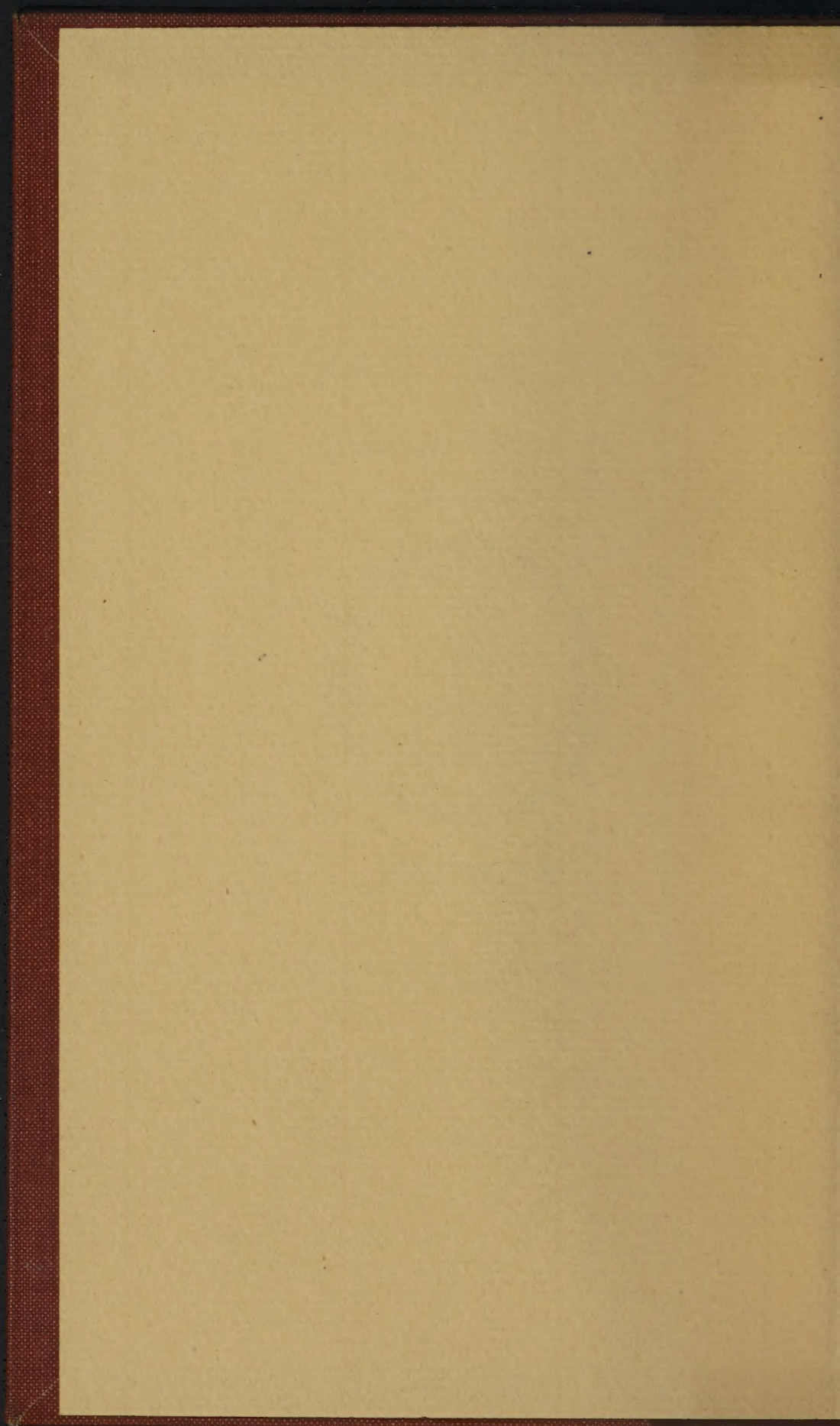
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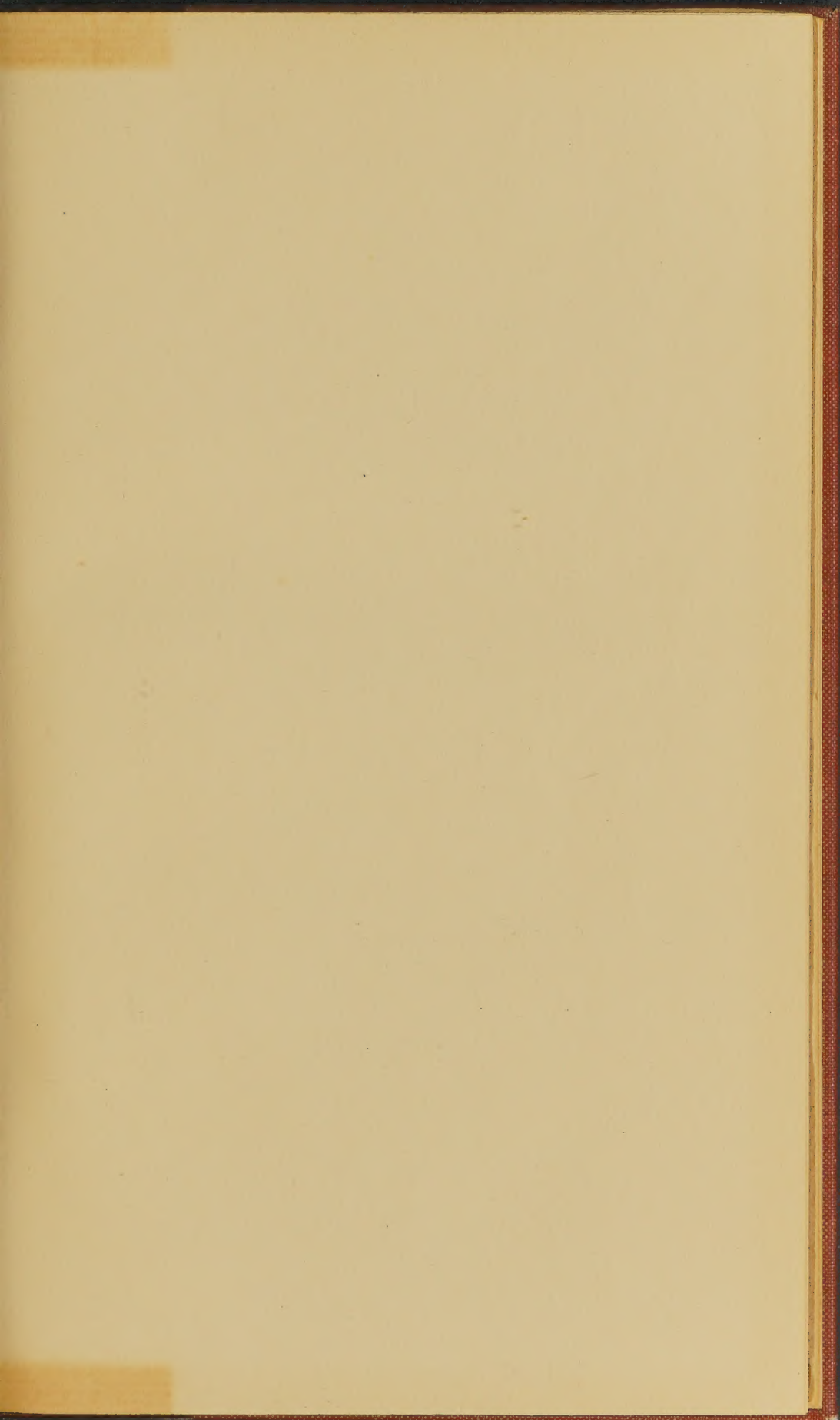
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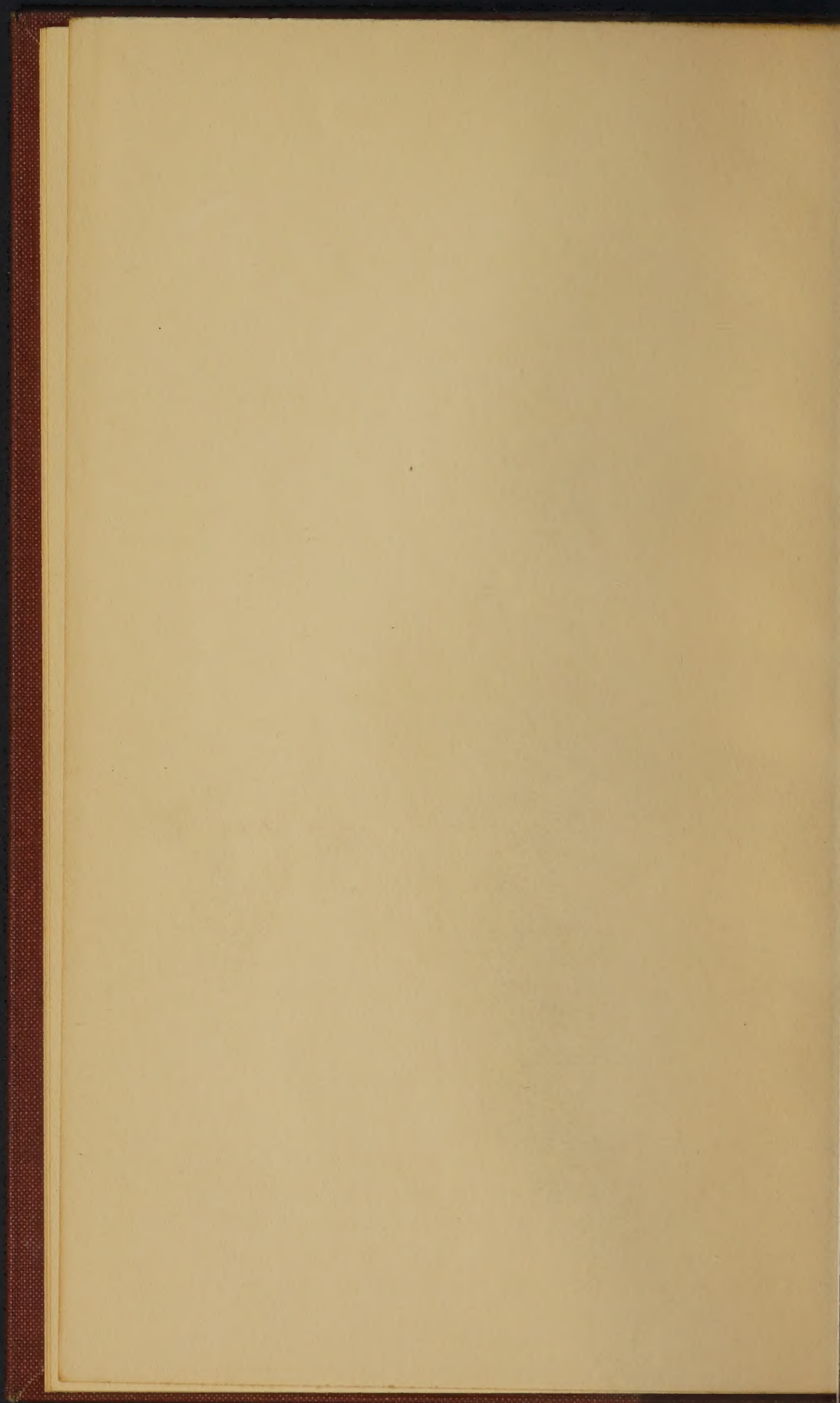


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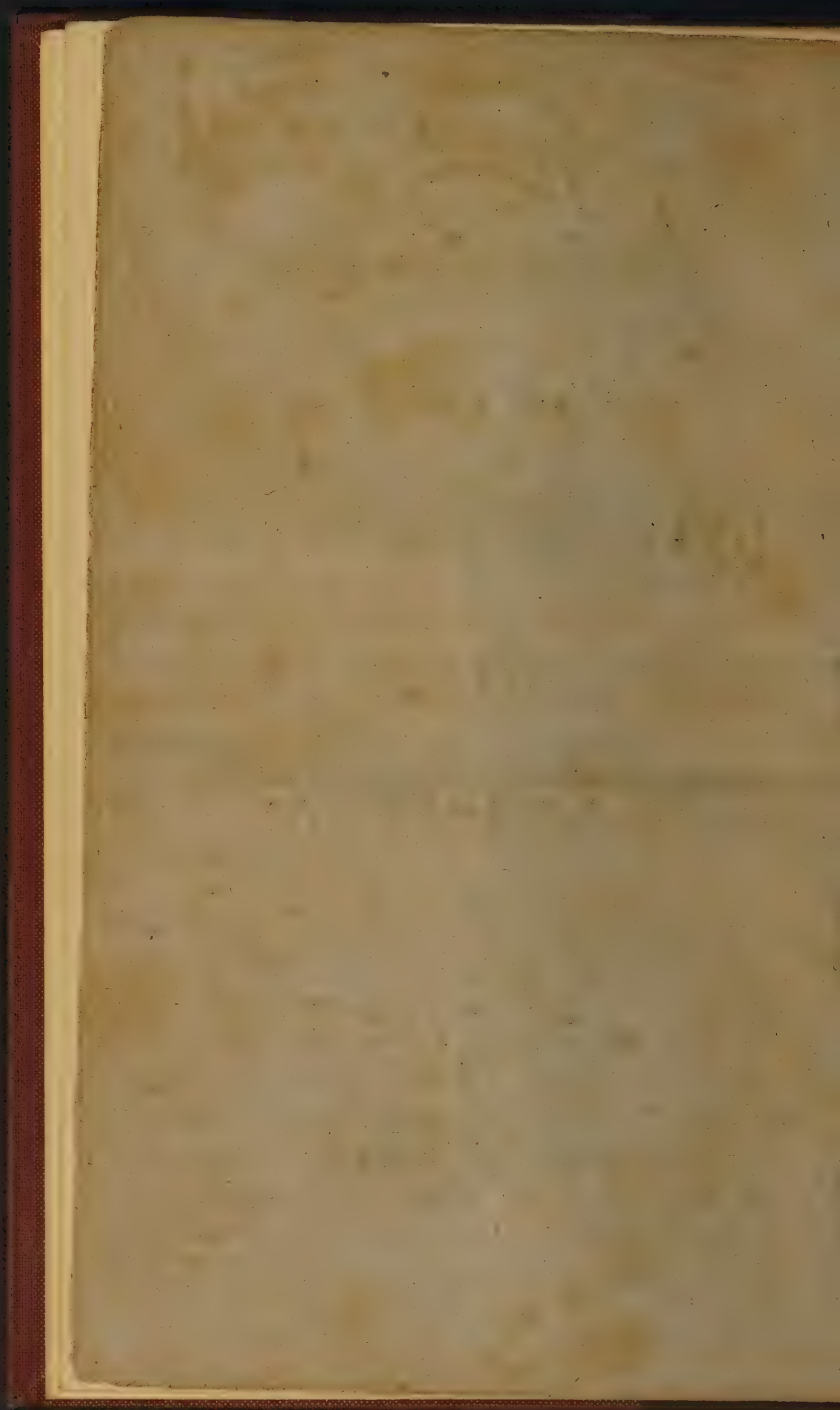




CAUSES
OF THE
DESTRUCTION
OF THE
AMERICAN TOWNS
ON THE
NIAGARA FRONTIER,
AND
FAILURE
OF THE
CAMPAIGN
OF THE
FALL
OF
1813.

BY GEORGE MCCLURE,
BRIGADIER-GENERAL OF NEW-YORK MILITIA.

BATH, N. Y. PRINTED IN 1817, BY BENJAMIN SMEAD.



INTRODUCTION.

WHEN the tumult of war has ceased—when the clamour against disasters of an unsuccessful campaign have subsided—and when the passions of men are restored to their proper equilibrium—a plain narrative of facts may correct errors of opinion respecting men and measures ; and the victim who has been immolated on the altar of public opinion for the errors of others, may appeal to the same tribunal for redress.

Although the subject of the disasters of the late war may, by many, be considered uninteresting; yet, when the honour and reputation of an individual is concerned, justice towards himself requires that errors of opinion, founded on a mistatement of facts, should be corrected ; that the innocent may not be confounded with the guilty, the brave and patriotic soldier with the poltroon, and the zealous supporter of his country's rights with the traitor.

The destruction of our towns on the Niagara Frontier, in the winter of 1813, from the suppression of official documents by the then Secretary of War, and the mutilated accounts laid before the public, require, as well in vindication of the injured, as a just exposure of its author, a detailed account of the military operations in that quarter. The sources from which the following facts are drawn, are personal observation and public documents: my object is truth, pure and unbiassed; and I will endeavour to give such a view of the misfortunes of that Campaign, and the causes which led to them, as will enable the future historian to transmit to posterity a true account of the characters who were the chief actors.

By many it may be asked, why I did not make this publication sooner; but in addition to the reasons above stated, I have only to say, that the current of public opinion was against me; secretary Armstrong, behind the curtain, was against me; his influence, as chief of the war department, was against me:—and for a Militia General to commence hostilities on such unequal terms, would, agreeably to modern warfare, be madness in the extreme.

No situation is so degrading, as that of the American soldier, abandoned by the people; and no grade of military character can be so reduced, even by misfortune, falsehood, or ingratitude, as to submit with impunity to the wanton robbery of his fame.

At an earlier period of my life, I might have made arms my profession, if my services had been necessary to the welfare of the Nation. In peace, however, it was seen that mankind would not be governed by the principles of justice ; and that the scourge of the world would visit this peaceful corner of the earth. The convulsions of Europe led me, therefore, to spend many leisure hours to acquire some knowledge of the art of war. Well knowing the bravery, courage, and patriotism of the people of New-York, I entered the field in obedience to their desire. The interest of my country demanded it. And although no nation was less skilled in the knowledge of fortifications and camp discipline—and no troops so raw as mine ever presented themselves for battle under more forbidding circumstances ; yet, with the talents and energy of my colleagues in arms, such a perfect subordination, activity, health, and cleanliness was exhibited among this formidable band of militia, in less than four weeks, that I hesitate not to say, this description of troops will eventually become the safest, cheapest, and most powerful security of the republic, under proper laws and regulations. These men had known no more of arms, than the mockery of tactics exhibited on a few annual militia holidays ; yet a glorious national spirit impelled them on to meet the foe. They had long been rocked in the cradle of peace, in luxury and ease ; yet with the bare ground for their pillow, the heavens their canopy, and endu-

ring unpropitious elements of inclement seasons, their robust limbs were soon hardened, their obedience complete, cultivated by choice, as well as necessity, and their zeal for conquest in the righteous cause, urged them to rush amongst the "peltings of the pitiless storms" of war.

This portrait of an invaluable force of Militia under my command is presented, because the melancholy fact of large corps of Militia (of New-York and Vermont) going to the field of battle without understanding a single elementary principle, and without being able to perform a single evolution, have left unfavourable impressions upon the public mind, respecting such aid in a Republican war. This people should know, the Militia were constantly impeded in attempts to render public service. And I dare hazard the declaration, that if either General Dearborn, Harrison, Brown, Scott, P. B. Porter, and I will include Wilkinson and Hampton, had been at the head of the War Department in 1813, the union of the Militia of the northern states with the Regular Troops, would have conquered Upper Canada, and the dreadful slaughter on the Niagara in 1814 would never have crimsoned the records of history.

The body of this People had not been debased by vices—nor their nerves unstrung by luxuries. Patriotic souls—in the pure chastened garb of Republican simplicity, steeled and riveted to their Country's true Independence and glory—these men (if Gen. Armstrong had permitted it) would

have basked forever in the benignant smiles of a Nation's Gratitude, and mounted the heavenly chariot of TOMPKINS, the sublime orator and beloved Patriot, with those "who overthrew embattled legions on Chippewa's memorable plain and who, with the battle's blaze, vaulted Niagara's canopy with a splendid midnight rain-bow."

Before I close my narrative, I shall give my opinion with regard to the best mode of Disciplining Militia—as I conceive the present regulations, and the laws for calling them into service, very deficient.



FAILURE
OF THE
CAMPAIGN
OF
1813.

EARLY in September, 1813, I arrived on the Niagara frontier with my brigade of detached militia, of about 2,000 men; I reported myself to Gen. Wilkinson, at Fort-George, whose force was between six and seven thousand men, exclusive of my militia, and about 400 Indians and volunteers, in all near 10,000 men. At this time the enemy, about 3000 strong, lay encamped within 4 miles of Fort-George, exposed, without works, in an open field.

Gen. Wilkinson informed me that he intended to evacuate Fort-George, and had actually commenced leveling the intrenchments. He stated that my militia would have nothing more to do than guard our side of the straights. In my answer, I remonstrated against giving up that post; that it had cost us much blood and treasure; that it would be a triumph to the enemy; and that the occupancy of it was of the utmost importance, if the conquest of Canada, or the defence of our frontier was the object; besides, it would be the cause of much clamor in the United States. The General reconsidered the matter, and informed me that second thoughts were sometimes best; that he

would leave Col. Scott, with about 800 regulars, if I would send over the same number of my militia to man the works; which was promptly agreed to. In the meantime I called upon the General, and recommended the absolute necessity of disposing of the enemy before he moved down the lake with his army. I proposed joining him with every man of my brigade, that would agree to cross the river (and there were but few who had conscientious scruples); that in a few hours we would take or destroy the enemy. We were near 10,000 against 3000. But the General declined the proposition, and said that his army was reserved for a greater purpose; I go, says he, where I shall make them smart at every pore; besides, that he was forbidden by Secretary Armstrong, to make any offensive movement in that quarter.

Here then, I exhibit a specimen of the Secretary's abilities, and boasted experience—He orders Wilkinson to go and attack Kingston or Montreal, and leave the enemy in his rear, when they were completely in his power! The principal force the British had in the Upper Province, lay before Fort-George—and how easily annihilated!—they could not possibly escape. We had the command of the lake, and their retreat could have been cut off by landing a detachment of our army at York, or the head of the lake. The enemy in that quarter once disposed of, Kingston and Montreal would have been taken in detail. Here it will seem that a few hours fighting would have decided the fate of the Upper Province, and the greatest part of the Lower.

Gen. Wilkinson embarked with his army, and the enemy, always on the alert, followed him round the lake, and met him wherever he attempted to land. After a few "*scratches with the enemy*,"

Wilkinson, Hampton, and Armstrong agreed to disagree in all things except that of going into winter quarters.

Many fine letters had passed between the Secretary and his Generals, on the subject of the manner and place of attack. It was truly a war in theory.

Hampton got swamped in Chateaugay woods, and retraced his steps to his starting place.—Wilkinson labored under a fresh attack of his old complaint—“*the smell fungus.*”—And Armstrong, tired of peddling the War Department about the country, returned to his head-quarters at Washington.—Here I will leave them to build their huts, and do their *grinding at French Mills*, while I return to the Niagara frontier.

After the departure of Gen. Wilkinson's army we expected the enemy would attack Fort George. Our piquets were within a short distance of each other; but they had anticipated Wilkinson's movements; and concluded that, rather than risk an engagement with us, by attacking the fort, they would withdraw their army, and go to the relief of their brethren at Kingston and Montreal. My militia became anxious to see a battle, and upon equal ground I was willing to gratify them. The day before the enemy commenced their retreat round the lake, Colonel Chapin (without orders) marched out of the fort with a few volunteers, and attacked the enemy's piquet, took a few prisoners, and drove the others in. Chapin returned to the fort, and immediately the enemy appeared in force in the edge of the woods back of New-Ark.—About four hundred Militia marched out to meet them, and a brisk engagement commenced. The enemy fell back with a view to decoy us into the woods, and cut off our retreat. Anticipating the enemy's plan, I ordered out a reinforcement of

about 200 men on each flank, who fought bravely until night put an end to the conflict. Much ammunition was expended on both sides, but our loss was trifling; the militia showed no want of courage, and the Indians who were engaged on our side, behaved well.

Undiscovered, the enemy commenced their retreat.—I immediately gave orders to pursue, not with a view of bringing them to a general engagement, as they were double our number, but to harass and detain them, in order to give Wilkinson time to strike a decisive blow, before they should reach Kingston. I marched out with about 1200 militia, and 4 or 500 Indians and volunteers under Gen. Porter. I progressed as far as the 12 mile creek, when an express arrived with a letter from Col. Scott, requesting me to return to the Fort, stating that he must depart immediately with his regiment, for Sacket's-Harbor, it being Gen. Wilkinson's orders, the moment he discovered the enemy's intention of going round the lake. My baggage waggons, which I had ordered to follow me, the Colonel pressed into his service. After capturing a very considerable quantity of the enemy's baggage and stores, I took a circuit through the country, and destroyed their barracks and fortifications, at Chippawa, Queenston Heights, St. Davids, and Cross Roads. On my return to the fort, I found it unoccupied, as Colonel Scott had crossed the river with his regiment.

The enemy, perceiving that there was no danger to be apprehended from the movements of Wilkinson and Hampton, began immediately to reinforce their garrisons at York and Burlington Heights. Well knowing that our force in that quarter consisted of a few raw militia, I carefully observed their movements, and gave the earliest information

to Secretary Armstrong. I urged the necessity, in the strongest terms, of making timely provision for the defence of our frontier; that the militia's term of service would expire in a few weeks; and that unless he intended to abandon the frontier to the mercy of the enemy, a competent regular force should be sent up, or a new draft of militia be immediately made. On this subject I wrote him at least twice a week, for five or six weeks previous to the expiration of the term of the militia then in service; but without effect, as his answers never touched upon the subject. When the enemy were making preparations to move down and attack us, General Harrison with his army arrived at Buffalo. As soon as he joined me, we agreed to march up and attack the enemy on the Heights of Burlington; and for that purpose the General authorised me to send expresses into the country, to invite volunteers to join us in the contemplated expedition.— A sufficient number of the patriotic citizens of the Western District eagerly joined our standard; and when we were within 24 hours of the time appointed for marching up to attack the enemy, our expectations were blasted by the arrival of commodore Chauncey's fleet, with positive orders from Secretary Armstrong, for General Harrison to embark with his army on board the fleet for Sacket's Harbor.

Here commenced a scene of confusion and disorder beyond description, which continued until the discharge of the militia.

It is impossible to describe the feelings of the militia and volunteers on this occasion. The best men of the district had volunteered their services cheerfully, with the expectation of seizing upon the most important post occupied by the enemy in the Upper Province. The name of General

Harrison, the conqueror of Proctor, and his uncircumcised allies under Tecumseh, was terrible indeed at this time in the British camp. We should have had but little more to do than exhibit our force before their works, when their savage allies would have deserted them; and the only alternative for the garrison would be to surrender or save themselves by flight.

But the secretary is a merciful man; he has no pleasure in the effusion of blood, or in the destruction of his enemies. Can he assign a plausible reason for such an order, at a time when the expedition against Montreal was abandoned? and still worse, when he knew that the detachment under my command, must be discharged in a few days, and he had made no provision for others to supply their place. To put the most charitable construction on his conduct, the destruction of our ill-fated frontier must have been predetermined; as to plead ignorance of our situation, and that of the enemy, would avail him nothing; the many letters he received from me would rise up in judgment against him.

I entered my protest against Gen. Harrison's embarkation of his troops, until after our expedition to Burlington Heights;* but his orders were imperative—he departed with every man of his army that was fit for duty, leaving only such as were subjects of the hospital.

After the departure of Gen. Harrison's army, I deemed it indispensably necessary, in order to quiet, and retain in service, the volunteers, to propose an expedition to the head of the lake. A council of war was accordingly convened, consisting of the chiefs of regiments, who approved,

* See Documents.

unanimously, the measure. And here it may be proper to observe, that as the cessation from war precludes the necessity of secrecy, the real object of that expedition shall be avowed.—Ten or twelve Indians were prisoners of war in Fort Niagara, one of whom, a chief of the Caghnawago tribe, had on many occasions expressed a friendship towards the United States. Accompanied by an interpreter, I held a council with the chief; the preliminaries of a treaty were entered into. He was to return to his nation, under pretence of making his escape. He was to counsel with his brethren; and if the terms proposed, met their approbation, another of their chiefs should come in privately to Fort-George. He departed and succeeded in gaining over his brethren. A chief accordingly came in, and pledged himself for the faithful observance of the treaty, as well in behalf of his nation, as others then in the service of His Majesty, at the heights of Burlington. He said that his brethren were much dissatisfied with the British, and only wished for an opportunity of joining us. After an exchange of presents, he set out for the British camp, and was to have joined my army with the whole of the Indian force, including their wives and children, at a given time and place; their wives and children were to be taken care of, on the American side, and such of their warriors as should think proper to join us, should receive the same pay as the officers and soldiers of the United States; their lands were guaranteed to them after the conquest of Canada.—Such were the outlines of the treaty. I marched out with about 1600 militia and volunteers, 200 mounted men, and between 1 and 200 Indians; we progressed as far as the twenty mile creek, and encamped on the heights for the night;

having previously ordered Col. Wilcox, with his mounted men, to make a rapid movement up to the head of the lake, or as near the enemy's lines as prudence would dictate, to reconnoitre, and ascertain as near as possible, their situation and force: this order was promptly executed, and the Colonel sent in an express the same night, giving the required information—the purport of which was, that the enemy, in force, were on their march down to meet us; that they were between 2 and 3000 strong; that the plans of the Indians were discovered, and the two chiefs seized, and in confinement. I summoned a council of officers, and laid the information before them. Col. Bloom, being the senior officer, gave it as his opinion that it would be madness to proceed, under present circumstances, and recommended striking our tents and returning to the Fort; the officers were unanimously of opinion that we should return, but not that night, nor hastily. I did not decide until after receiving the Morning Report; by which, to their disgrace be it told, our forces were reduced, by desertion to about one thousand men. I then considered it indispensably necessary to return to the Fort, as part of the enemy came down in boats, and might, by a rapid movement, get possession of the Fort in our absence, it being then manned principally by deserters from the main body.

In the mean time I expected that Gen. Porter, agreeable to his solicitations, had marched with some volunteers, from Buffalo to Long Point, in order to secure or destroy a large quantity of military stores, belonging to the enemy—while I should draw their attention until that object was accomplished; but the General not being able to recruit a sufficient force, abandoned the expedition.

About this time the militia demanded their discharge, their term of service having expired. I did every thing in my power to induce them to remain in the service a few weeks longer, until provision could be made for the defence of the frontier. I offered a bounty, but in vain—some few received it, and afterwards deserted. At this critical moment, I still cherished a hope, that some description of troops would shortly arrive. But no, Secretary Armstrong was amusing himself about Albany, and lulling our patriotic Governor into a belief that the enemy were all gone from the head of the lake, or would go shortly. Had he remained at his post, in the city of Washington, instead of marching and countermarching between Albany, Black River, and Sacket's-Harbor, all would have been well with us. Governor Tompkins, as a faithful sentinel, would have made timely provision for the defence of our frontier, and the protection of its inhabitants. He would not have relied on information derived from vague newspaper paragraphs, instead of official statements of the commanding officer, who, it will be presumed, at least, could afford the most correct information.

The militia and volunteers (with the exception of about 80 men of Col. Greives' regiment) returned to their homes, which reduced the Garrison of Fort George, to about 150 men, seventy of whom, were the sick of Gen. Harrison's army, who were scarce able to crawl from the hospital. The enemy, at this time on their march, and within twelve miles, compelled me to decide immediately, either to wait their attack, or withdraw the garrison to Fort Niagara. I summoned a council of the officers, regulars and militia, and put the question, Is Fort George tenable, with

our present force? They unanimously decided in the negative. I also laid before them, a letter from Gen. Armstrong, on the subject of the destruction of New-Ark.—They gave it as their opinion, (with one exception) that the town ought to be destroyed ; that, laying aside the defence of Fort-George, it became absolutely necessary for the defence of Fort-Niagara, which lay immediately opposite. It would deprive the enemy of quarters, and being winter, they would not be able to penetrate the earth, or rebuild and fortify themselves at such an inclement season, and consequently, would be compelled to retrace their steps to their garrison at Burlington Heights.

It has been remarked, that New-Ark might have been destroyed from Niagara, with hot shot, which to be sure, would look a little more military.—This, however, is not the case, the town lay much lower than the bank of the river between it and Niagara, and consequently the shot would pass through the upper part of the buildings, without effect. To destroy a framed building, the shot must be thrown so as to lodge in the sills or combustibles in the lower floor. The experiment had been effectually tried by Gen. Dearborn's army, previous to the capture of that town, in the early part of that campaign; every house was completely riddled with shot, in attempting to burn it, but without effect. It was the opinion of my worthy friend, Col. Fleming, who was one of my council, a hero of the revolution, and perhaps one of the ablest engineers and artillerists in the U. States, that it was necessary, for the purpose of the defence of Niagara, to destroy the town, and that it could not be done by shot. These were some of the arguments used by the council of war. It was therefore determined, to destroy the town,

as well for the reasons assigned, as in compliance with the Secretary's order. Twelve hours notice was therefore given, to the few inhabitants of that village, to remove themselves, and their effects, to some place of greater safety, and such as should think proper, were invited to cross over to the American side, where they should be provided for. About half the inhabitants accepted this offer, who generally, in a few days, removed into the interior. And now remains to be exhibited, a picture of New-Ark, and the dastardly conduct of Secretary Armstrong, in the disavowal of the order, by virtue of which, and through a sense of military subordination, I conceived myself in duty bound to execute, with the consent and advice of a very respectable council of war.

Here shall I expose to view a specimen of Armstrong's ingenuity and deception, which characterises the man, and ought to have disqualified him for any office of trust, and more particularly that of chief of the War Department. The ambiguity of his style, is well known; the author of the anonymous letters and addresses to the army, at the close of the revolution, is also well known. He was known to the virtuous Washington, who not only discovered, but checked him in his ambitious and unprincipled practices. And the author of all the disasters which took place on the Niagara frontier, and the excesses which were committed on its defenceless inhabitants shall be made known. Take a retrospective and impartial view of that campaign, and you will find nothing but a series of singular blunders and disastrous events, which affords suitable imagery for narrative, and a superabundance of materials for history.

The ill placed confidence in the abilities and integrity of the chief of the War Department, will

account, in a great measure, for the failure of that campaign, which I shall endeavour to prove in the sequel. Here I shall lay before you, the order of the secretary for destroying the town of New-Ark, which he, in so disingenuous a manner, disavowed in his correspondence with Governor Prevost :

“ War Department, 4th Oct. 1813.

“SIR,—Understanding that the defence of the posts committed to your charge, may render it proper to destroy the town of N.A. you are hereby required to apprise its inhabitants of this circumstance, and to request them to remove themselves and effects to some place of greater safety.

Signed, “J. ARMSTRONG.

“ To the Officer Commanding, &c.”

This is the order the Secretary thought proper to disavow, not to his fellow-citizens, openly, but privately, to one of His Majesty's Governors.—How degrading! How insulting to a free and independent people! thus to truckle and cringe to a servant of the enemy, instead of taking a bold and lofty stand, in defence of the rights of his country, and the officers subject to his command. He might have replied to Gov. Prevost, and stated that he had issued an order for the destruction of N. A. under certain circumstances, and that the officer, charged with the execution of it, had acted according to the best of his judgment; and that, although it may be contrary to the rules of civil warfare, still it ill becomes His Majesty's Governor to remonstrate on this subject, while the smoke of the ruins of Haverdegrace, French Town, Sodus, &c. is still ascending, and their defenceless inhabitants, as well as the *Virgins of Hampton*, calling aloud for vengeance and retaliation. But

no. The order appeared to be unpopular, and he thought proper to disavow it, and throw the odium on the commanding officer, declaring it to be contrary to the rules of civilized warfare. And here it will be seen, he has convicted himself; because, if it was contrary to the rules of civilized warfare, why should he issue such an order, under any circumstance? And to suffer an officer, under his immediate control, to go unpunished for a violation of his orders, is not only unmilitary, but carries with it, strong presumptive proof, that a public investigation would show the weakness of his head, the wickedness of his heart, and his unfitness for the discharge of the duties of that important office. Did I ever shun an investigation? No. On the contrary I invited it; I called upon him to do me justice. In public print, I challenged an investigation, but in vain; his object was to bury the transactions in oblivion, while he would point me out secretly, to the public, as the cause of all the disaster.

As it respects the destruction of New-Ark, perhaps here lies the grand mistake—He only gives me the initials, N. A. of the town he intended I should destroy, and instead of burning the town of New-Ark, in Jersey, or some other town, to which those initials will apply, I took it for granted, that he meant the enemy's town of New-Ark, in Upper Canada—I was not aware at the time, of the ambiguous style of the writer, which will, in some measure, atone for my offence, if I have committed one.

I could have dictated a more suitable order for the secretary. He might have written me thus:

SIR,—Understanding that the defence of the posts committed to your charge, renders it indispensably necessary that you make a requisition

on Major-General Hall's division for 3,000 militia, or such a number as you may deem necessary, to supply the place of those whose term of service will expire on the —— day of ——; you are therefore required to make timely provision for the defence of the frontier, being best acquainted with the enemy's movements, intention, and force.

Signed, &c. &c.

Had such an order been issued, and forwarded to me, in due time, all would have been well; it would have superceded the necessity of destroying the town of N. A.—the lives and property of our citizens on the frontier, would have been protected—the enemy would not have dared to disturb us, during the winter—Fort George, and every other post on the frontier, would have remained in our possession—and our citizens might have pursued their several avocations, reposed in safety, and bid defiance to the tomahawk and scalping-knife.

The criminal neglect of our frontier, by Secretary Armstrong, when facts are made known, must be obvious to every person of reason and common sense. But in order to screen himself from public censure, and cloak his guilt, he, through the medium of the National Intelligencer, announces to the public, that he had made two requisitions on the Governor of New-York, for militia drafts, and that one had failed.—Miserable subterfuge! The Governor and myself know better—Major Gen. Hall, on whose division the requisition would consequently have been made, knows better. The truth is, after the detached militia under my command, had returned to their homes, I received a requisition on Gen. Hall's division, with directions to fill the blank with such a number of men as I should think proper, and send it to Gen. Hall.

This was the timely provision he made for the defence of the frontier, when the requisition ought to have been made, at least, one month before the expiration of the term of service of the former draft.

Judge of my feelings at this time.—I was ordered to remain on the frontier, with less than 300 effective men—a number scarcely sufficient to man Fort-Niagara. There I was to be offered up a sacrifice, to atone for the crimes of the secretary—I was to be the victim of clamor, which is easily raised, but difficult to allay—here I suffered myself to be betrayed by a kiss, and saluted by the insidious and artful correspondence* with the secretary, wherein he approbated all my conduct, while commanding on the Niagara frontier.

About this time, a very respectable deputation from the Bay of Canty, came across the lake, in an open boat, and offered, if I would send over a detachment of 2 or 300 men, with some camp equipage, and 1000 stand of arms, they would join me, with from 900 to 1200 men; and they had no doubt, but on their march to the head of the lake, as many more would join our standard.—Three fourths of the inhabitants on that side of the lake, only waited for an opportunity to join us. But it was entirely out of my power to render any assistance to those people, or embrace their favorable proposition. I had a sufficiency of arms, but was destitute of men, or vessels of any description to transport them, as Gen. Wilkinson had scarcely left me a canoe. I therefore advised them to return home, and keep their intentions as secret as possible, until a more favorable opportunity should offer.

* See Documents.

After Fort-George was evacuated, I had determined to remain in Fort-Niagara until the arrival of troops of some description; but having received by express, several letters and petitions, from Gen. Porter, and the inhabitants of Buffalo, begging for protection, I changed my mind; and after giving Capt. Leonard the necessary orders, and stationing about 80 men of Col. Greives' regiment at Lewiston, and the Canadian Volunteers at Manchester, I repaired to Buffalo. My force then consisted of six or eight officers.—I published hand-bills, stating our defenceless situation, and sent them, by express, into the country, inviting the inhabitants to volunteer for a short time—I ordered out Gen. Hopkins' brigade of militia, en masse, to rendezvous immediately, at Buffalo, for the defence of the town. This act was unauthorised, but the necessity of the case required it, and I was under no apprehension of incurring censure.

The militia, in a few days, began to come in; and in the mean time, Major Riddle, with about 100 recruits, collected from Batavia and Canandaigua, arrived; about sixty of whom I ordered to embark immediately on board boats, under Capt. Pierce, for Schlosser, for the purpose of reinforcing Niagara; but they had progressed only a short distance, when the news of the capture of that post, was announced. Here I am again compelled to call the Secretary to an account, for a most unpardonable neglect of duty, in suffering Capt. Leonard to remain in the command of Niagara Fort, when he knew that charges were preferred against him, for (as I suppose) disaffection to the government. After the capture of Niagara, and after I had returned home, I received a letter from Gen. Armstrong, stating, that some five or

six months previous, specific charges had been made against Leonard—that he ordered him to be arrested, and Capt. Armistead to supercede him in the command of the Fort. It appears, however, that no arrest or suspension took place—Leonard continued in command—and Secretary Armstrong was apprised of this fact, by my communications and weekly returns, but never gave me the remotest hint of his suspicions of him, until one month after all was lost. I never entertained a very favorable opinion of Leonard as an officer—but he ranked every other regular officer, and there was no alternative. Had I received a hint from Armstrong, I should have found means to dispose of him in such a way as to secure the public safety—and put in his place, one more trust-worthy.

The number of men left in that garrison, had they been commanded by a faithful and vigilant officer, were sufficient to repulse any force the enemy were able to bring against them at that time; but little or no opposition was made.

On the night of the 19th Dec. about 11 P. M. the commandant, Leonard, left the Fort, and slept at his farm, three miles below—slept did I say!—No! on reflection, I cannot believe he could take repose.—He must have known that the enemy was making every necessary preparation for the purpose of invasion, as the day previous, I apprised him, by an express from Buffalo, that a deserter had come in, giving information of the enemy's intention of passing over next night, and charged him to be prepared for the attack, and not suffer himself to be surprised; besides, from his own observation, he must have seen the enemy busily employed in building boats at Queenston, and concentrating their forces there.

Will it be presumed then, that an officer of Capt. Leonard's experience—one that had been in the service of the United States, near 20 years, should so far lose sight of his duty, as to desert his post at the moment he expected the attack, unless it should be in pursuance of some treasonable arrangement? No—I say, under all these circumstances, he could not have slept—an awful responsibility must deprive him of rest—the cries of his slaughtered brethren in the Fort, although at three miles distance, must have pierced his conscience, if not his ears! After the capture of the Fort, where are we to look for this *vigilant* and *faithful* officer? At home, with his wife and family?—No. On his way to Schlosser or Buffalo, to join the remains of our army?—No. Retiring into the interior for safety?—No! No! We must look for him in the enemy's camp, a voluntary captive! On the morning after the Fort was captured, he marched in, and pretended to be not a little surprised to find it occupied by the enemy. After he was exchanged, and arrived in the United States, all was silent. His arrest and trial were daily expected—his conviction or acquittal was deemed indispensable.

But what was the conduct of our *faithful* Secretary, on this occasion? Why, he or some other officer, had Leonard arrested, and marched under guard, from the frontier to Albany, (as I have since been informed); and after some show and bustle, his name was expunged from the rolls of the army. Here lies a mystery which I shall not attempt, at present, to unriddle. It appears he was liberated without a trial—and it is not my duty to pronounce him guilty.

A faithful narrative of facts, is what I owe the public; and I shall endeavor to perform that duty

without fear favor, or partiality—not doubting but an enlightened public will justly appreciate the merits of the faithful and meritorious, and at the same time, consign to disgrace, all such as have violated the important trust reposed in them.

But to return to my very disagreeable situation at Buffalo—it had been my intention to return to Niagara, after organizing such militia and volunteers as should come in ; but my views were thwarted by a division of the people, occasioned by an unfortunate dispute which took place between Col. Chapin and myself, while I commanded in Fort-George. Knowing that he stood high in the estimation of the inhabitants of Buffalo, and that he might be instrumental and useful in saving the town, I wrote him a conciliatory letter, which was forwarded to him by Gen. Porter, requesting him to resume the command of the volunteers ; but he was inflexible.—Each had his friends, and a civil war, if I may call it such, was like to be the consequence.

When civil commotion rages, no purity of character—no services, however exalted, can afford a secure shield from the shafts of calumny and designing men. All the difficulty that arose might have been amicably adjusted, had the inhabitants of Buffalo and chiefs of militia exerted their influence. Had they studied their true interest, and the safety of the place, they must have discovered, that harmony and a cordial co-operation with the commanding officer, was indispensably necessary for the defence of the town——“United we stand—Divided we fall.”

That description of troops called Volunteers, are among all others the most useless—the most clamorous, and least to be relied on, when their services are most needed ; they are too independent to be-

come subject to martial law, and strict subordination—without which, what is an army but a lawless mob? They volunteer their services with all the enthusiasm imaginable; they arrive hastily at the scene of action; and after a few days' service in camp, they volunteer to *return home*, pouring out their vengeance by the way, against their commanding officer. When I speak of that description of troops my remarks are general; and although there are many to whom my observations will apply, still there are many who have rendered essential services to their country in the late war. The splendid achievements and heroic deeds of the brave Gen. Porter and his volunteer corps, in Canada, in 1814—the bravery also of that description of troops under Jackson, at Orleans—and the Baltimore volunteers—together with many other instances which might be given, during the late war, are exceptions to my general rule. It is however a game of chance for the officer that is assigned to command them. It is like a lottery of one hundred blanks to a prize. Drafted militia, if good officers are assigned to command them, can in a short time be made equal to any other description of troops. Subordination is the first and leading principle which a soldier ought to be instructed in. A well disciplined army may very justly be compared to a machine; it is moved and moveable at the will of the commander. But, says a militia man, I will not be commanded and ordered about by such and such officers—I am as good a man as he is.—The contagion spreads through the camp, and anarchy and confusion is the consequence.—If all the officers of militia would faithfully discharge their duty, in carrying into effect the orders of their commanding officer, very different would be the order and conduct of the army. But this is not

generally the case; some are courting popularity, and are afraid to incur the displeasure of their men; all distinction is done away; they place themselves upon a level with their men, and consequently neither command respect nor obedience. Rigid discipline is indispensable in an army, as well for its own safety as its usefulness.

With a few exceptions, I might boast of being honored with the command of the best brigade of detached militia that ever served on the Niagara frontier. Perfect order was preserved, until within about two weeks before they were discharged.— I cannot express myself in too high terms of esteem for the faithful services and able support afforded me by the officers of the brigade generally. And it would be the height of injustice, should I omit to mention the names of a few regular officers, who served with me the latter part of the campaign.— Major Camp, of the quarter master's department; Major Frasier and Captain Rodgers, as volunteer aids; and Major Riddle, of the 15th regiment— whose zeal for the promotion of the cause of their country, justly entitles them to my thanks and those of their government.

Among the vicissitudes incident to life, no event could have filled me with greater anxiety than the capture of Niagara, and the miserable preparation for the defence of Buffalo and Black-Rock. On the one hand, I was the only officer on the frontier, clothed with power to command—on the other, I was wholly destitute of the means. My army consisted of about 100 faithful regulars, while the inhabitants of Buffalo, and the principal part of the volunteers enlisted under the banners of Col. Chapin.

I therefore conceived that I could not be useful there, and leaving Gen. Hopkins in command, I

repaired to Batavia, and there meeting with Maj. Gen. Hall, I requested him to go on to Buffalo and take command of the army, while I should remain at Batavia, and organize the detachment which had been ordered into service, as they might arrive.

I remained a few days at Batavia, and ordered the militia, as they came in, to march without delay, to Buffalo, and report themselves to Major Gen. Hall.

As it respects the battle of Buffalo and Black-Rock, I have but little to say.—Gen. Hall, who commanded, is best acquainted with the facts in relation to that affair.—Previous to this, I had left the frontier and returned to my home.

DOCUMENTS.

Copy of a letter from General Wilkinson to General M'Clure.

NIAGARA, Sept. 21, 1813.

Dear General,

Although personally unknown, your letter by the express, is so exactly in unison with my own feelings, that it gives you a title to my respect and esteem.

Come on, and rely upon my exertions to make you comfortable, as far as my power and my means extend.—Come on, and take the command on this frontier, while I go elsewhere, to give the enemy *a blow that shall make him smart at every pore.*

All officers of the army, and persons attached to it, are hereby commanded to obey your orders, and to furnish to your requisition, whatever the law or usage may allow, for the comfort and accommodation of the troops.

I am, with respect and regard,

Your obedient servant,

J. WILKINSON."

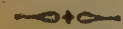
*Brigadier-General M'Clure,
com'g detached militia.*

Extract of a letter from Gen. Wilkinson to Gen. M'Clure, dated Fort-George, Sept. 26, 1813.

At Fort-Niagara, I shall leave two experienced Captains,* with seventy or eighty artillerists; the

* Leonard and Read—the latter, an excellent officer, was ordered on the recruiting service, by Gen. Harrison.

residue of the garrison, about two hundred and fifty or three hundred men, judiciously officered, must be furnished by your own brigade.



(COPY.)

WAR-DEPARTMENT, Oct. 19, 1813.

Sir—Ascertain, if possible, whether the enemy has abandoned his strong position, at the head of Burlington Bay—if he has, it would be well for you to seize and occupy it, with a competent detachment—erecting upon a commanding part of it, a strong block-house, in which some pieces of artillery may be placed.

I am, sir, very respectfully,
your obedient servant.

J. ARMSTRONG.

Brigadier-General M'Clure,
com'g on the Niagara.



November 4, 1813.

Sir—You will report weekly, the strength of your command, whether militia, volunteers, or Indians, to the War-Office, pay estimates cannot be otherwise made.

Yours, respectfully,

JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Brig. Gen. M'Clure, &c.



Extract of a letter from Gen. M'Clure to the Secretary at War, dated Niagara, Oct. 6.

I received your communication on the subject of Col. Louis. Your suspicions of the Colonel's motives were well founded.—I discovered that he was endeavoring to prevail on our Indians to be neutral, although he denied the fact. I found in his possession a paper, signed by himself and some chiefs and warriors, directed to the Indians of the

Six Nations, advising their neutrality. I ordered him to be confined within the Fort for several days, and have now ordered him to depart.

About 450 Indians have assembled, and have at last agreed to cross the river.—The great difficulty with them, is, that they have received no pay for their services last summer. I think they will be very useful to me, and they ought to be paid promptly for their services. I have promised them \$10 for every prisoner they bring in, and \$8 for the arms of those they kill.

I expect, in a few days, to give you a good account of the enemy.—From the best information that I can obtain, they are making preparations to withdraw part of their troops—Proctor is said to be retreating at the rate of 40 miles per day, and Harrison at his heels.

I have 1500 volunteers and Indians, ready for fight; and the moment I think I am justifiable in attacking the enemy, will do it.—Should they attack Forts George or Niagara, they will pay dear for their temerity. I expect 1000 volunteers to join me in the course of ten days.



*Copy of a letter from Gen. M'Clure to the Secretary
at War, dated*

FORT-GEORGE, Oct. 16, 1813.

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 4th inst. is before me, the contents of which will be duly attended to.* All the regular forces at this place, under Col. Scott, commenced their march yesterday, for Sacket's Harbor.

The militia and Indians under my command, have been actively employed in pursuing and

* This was the order for the destruction of New-Ark.

harrassing the enemy; and I have no doubt, that, had I been supported by the regulars, the principal part of the enemy's forces would have fallen into our hands. I pursued with 1500 volunteers and Indians, about 20 miles up the lake.—I found an immense quantity of flour, pork, salt, cloathing, arms, &c. and took eleven prisoners.—I destroyed their barracks at Chippawa and Queenston Heights, and all their store-houses and huts, in their encampments at St. Davids, Cross Roads, Four and Twelve Mile Creeks. The enemy retreated with the utmost precipitation, to the Forty Mile Creek and Burlington—They declared, on their retreat, that from the appearance of the embarkation of my troops across the river, that my force was not less than 5000 Yankees and 1000 Indians.*—And their officers further declared, they believed that such of the militia as would cross the river, would fight well. They are by this time informed of my real force, which is much inferior to theirs—and I should not be disappointed if they pay me a visit before many days. If their fleet should come up the lake, it is highly necessary that Commodore Chauncey should watch their movements, as both forts are manned by inexperienced militia. I gave an invitation to volunteers, but they came in slowly. If I had 500 men in addition to my present force, I think I could destroy the enemy at Burlington.

I have some choice men on this side the strait; who will fight and defeat an equal number of the enemy. The Indians plundered and brought in sixty horses—I forbid their crossing the river, and returned the horses to their owners.

* In order to deceive the enemy, I sent back the troops in the night, and embarked them again, in the morning.

Letter from Gen. M'Clure to the Secretary at War.

HEAD-QUARTERS, FORT-GEORGE, Oct. 23.

Dear Sir,

The peculiar situation of this frontier, renders it highly necessary that government should adopt some further measures, not only for the protection of our citizens, but for the security of the inhabitants of this part of the province, now under our control.

From the circumstance of the British army being employed in building barracks at Burlington-Heights, it would seem certain, that they are determined to make a stand there during the winter. In this event it is obvious, that the possession of this Fort is of the utmost consequence, in order to keep them in check, and prevent daily depredations upon our extensive and much exposed frontier.

It is very probable, that the severe measures of retaliation to which we have been compelled, will induce the enemy to visit upon our defenceless inhabitants the whole force of their indignation. Humanity as well as policy would seem to require, that the Government should afford some protection to that portion of our citizens, whose enterprise has populated, and whose bravery has defended an important frontier.

Should Gen. Harrison, with his army, approach the head of the lake, (which, however, I do not think probable) the British will either retreat to Montreal, through the wilderness by lake Simcoe, or will surrender. In this event, it is equally important, and it will be equally humane and politic, to extend American protection to inhabitants, who may soon become members of our republic. That such protection will be necessary, the pillage of our own citizens every day abundantly proves.

The term of service of the drafted militia under my command, will expire in about five weeks ;— the regular force now on this frontier, consists of perhaps sixty men ; unless, then, it is determined, to abandon this Fort and Fort-Niagara, to the mercy of the enemy, a competent regular force ought to be ordered here, or another detachment of militia should be immediately made. The prospect of any regulars being ordered here, appears very doubtful—and I need not remind your excellency of the delay inevitably attending the calling out militia. If, therefore, any thing is intended to be done, it should be done immediately ; to insure this object, as far as depends upon me, I have sent a copy of this letter to the Governor of the state of New-York.

From the best information I can obtain, the British force consists of from 12 to 1500 regulars, and 800 Indian warriors. Their strength is superior to mine, and it would not excite surprise, if they should pay me a visit soon.—Come when they will, I shall be prepared for them. Indeed, if the volunteers called for, turn out according to my wishes, and I can collect an equal force, I will march out and attack them. I have been informed that the Indians now with the British army are much dissatisfied—they are fearful the British will abandon them to our just indignation, for their manifold atrocities—and only wait an invitation to become neutral on condition of pardon, or to join us against the British, if themselves and their families can be spared.—In consequence, I have held a council with the Indian prisoners, in Fort-Niagara, who perfectly accord with my views.—I have sent one of them, a chief of the Caghnawaga tribe, to the British camp, with proposals to their Indians.—I have promised him his liberty, whether

he succeeds or not—and he is made to believe that the lives of his brethren in our hands, depend on his fidelity. Were the Indians once well disposed of, I flatter myself that in a short time, I could give a good account of Vincent and his army.

My forces on both sides of the strait, do not exceed 1200 effective men. The Indians have all left me, for no other reason than my prohibiting them from plundering the inhabitants. It would give me great pleasure, could I collect a force sufficient to drive Vincent out of his hiding place.

I am, sir, very respectfully,
your obed't servant,

GEO. M'CLURE.

The Hon. J. Armstrong.

To Gen. Harrison, on his arrival at Buffalo.

DEAR SIR,

This moment I received your note by Lieut. Rosevolt. Your arrival on this frontier is hailed with much satisfaction. It will be my greatest pride and pleasure, to co-operate cordially with you, in dislodging the enemy from their strong hold at the head of lake Ontario. I have been making preparations, and calling out volunteers for that purpose—but have not succeeded, as yet, according to my expectations. I find from good information, that the enemy's forces are greater than I anticipated.—They consist of from 2000 to 2500 regulars, and about 800 Indians.—They have been moving towards me, but on hearing of your arrival, have fell back to Burlington Heights. My scouts of mounted-men who are continually out, will be able to report to you to-morrow morning, some further information, in relation to the enemy's movements.

D

Please to command my services in doing every thing in my power for the reception and accommodation of your troops. The town of New-Ark will afford comfortable quarters, as the houses are principally deserted. The Assist. D. Q. Master General, Capt. Camp, is also ready to obey your orders.

I have the honor to be, &c.

GEO. M'CLURE.

Dated Fort-George, Oct. 28, 1813.

Major-General Harrison.

(COPY.)

From General M'Clure to General Harrison.

FORT-GEORGE, NOV. 15, 1813.

Sir,—The subject of our conversation this morning has occupied my most serious reflections. The deadly blow heretofore given to the patriotism of our citizens, on this frontier, have prepared them for murmurs and complaints. Those who are now on their march, have left their homes and their business, under great sacrifices, with the certainty of being brought into action. The last address which I issued under your directions, and which I am happy to find has met your approbation, gives them reason for indulging the expectation of service ; and they are anxious to drive the enemy from their borders forever. The high character of Gen. Harrison, combined with these circumstances, has excited strong interest in the public mind, relative to our operations.

In this peculiar situation of affairs, I feel it due to the gallant volunteers and militia, who are assembled and collecting—and to my own reputation, most respectfully to solicit, that if it is not incompatible with your instructions and your better judgment, you will not abandon our pro-

jected expedition to Burlington Heights. Such is the anxious wish of the militia—and I have no doubt the soldiers under your command, are equally if not more desirous of the employment.

My anxiety on this subject, I trust will excuse the appearance of any disrespect in making this communication, which certainly is far from my feelings.—My confidence in the valor, ability and prudence of Gen. Harrison, will dispose me most cheerfully to submit to any arrangement he may be bound to make, however great may be my disappointment in the result.

I have the honor to be,
with the utmost respect,
your obedient servant,

GEO. M'CLURE.

Maj. Gen. Wm. H. Harrison.

From General Harrison to General M'Clure.

HEAD-QUARTERS, New-Ark, Nov. 15, 1813.

Dear Sir,

Your letter to me, of this morning, has been received. I feel most severely, the weight of the reasons which you urge, for the prosecution of the intended expedition to Burlington. The disappointment, however, to the brave and patriotic men who have turned out, under the expectation of serving their country effectually in the field, at this inclement season of the year, is the most painful circumstance attending it; as I am well convinced, from the information received this morning and last evening, that the enemy are removing, as fast as possible, from the head of the Lake to Kingston, which has been left with a very small part of the force that was lately there—and it is more than probable, that should we advance in force, the enemy having now but a few

effective men at Burlington, would destroy the stores which they have remaining there, and retreat too rapidly to be overtaken.—There are considerations, however, which would make it extremely desirable to make an exhibition of our force in that quarter.—But the orders I have received from the Secretary of War, leaves me no alternative.—Com. Chauncey is extremely pressing that the troops should immediately embark, declaring that the navigation at this season, to small vessels, is very dangerous.

The force at Sacket's-Harbor is very small—less by one regiment, than the Secretary of War supposed it would be, when he gave me the order for the embarkation of the regular troops that are here. The troops at York are all hastening down to Kingston. Sacket's-Harbor may be endangered by even a delay of a few days, and should the troops that are here not get down before the lake is frozen, our fleet may be destroyed for the want of their aid.—I cannot, therefore, take upon myself, the responsibility of delaying their going down, even a day.

Will you be so obliging, at the proper time, as to explain the above circumstances to the patriots, who have left their homes with the intention of assisting me to drive the enemy far from our borders—and assure them that I shall ever recollect, with the *warmest gratitude*, the *partiality* which they have been pleased to express for me, and their preference of serving under my command.

I will direct payment to be made to the volunteers, for rations and forage, in coming on.

Accept my best wishes for your health and happiness, and believe me sincerely your friend,

WM. HENRY HARRISON.

Brig. Gen. M'Clure, Fort-George.

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEW-ARK, 15 Nov. 1813.

Dear Sir,

Being ordered to return to the westward, you will be pleased to resume the command which you exercised previous to my arrival on this frontier. The orders which you have heretofore received will govern you. It will be necessary that you keep a vigilant eye over the disaffected part of the inhabitants. And I recommend that you make use of the zeal, activity and local knowledge which Col. Wilcox certainly possesses, to counteract the machinations of our enemy, and ensure the confidence of our friends amongst the inhabitants. It will however, I am persuaded, be your wish, as it is your duty, to guard the latter as much as possible from oppression. The volunteers which were lately called out, will be retained as long as you consider their services necessary—the drafted militia, until further orders are received from the Secretary at War.* There can be little doubt of its being the intention of the enemy to send the greater part of the troops which they have at Burlington and York, to Kingston, and to make York the right of their line. They may, however, leave a small command at Burlington; and these may be so securely posted, as to render them safe from any desultory expedition you may set on foot:—but it is desirable to have any supplies, which they may have collected at the mills in the neighborhood, destroyed; and should the success below be not such as to promise possession of the whole of the Upper Province, the mills may be destroyed.

In closing this communication, I should not do justice to my feelings, if I were not to acknowledge

* There was no law to compel drafted militia to remain in service longer than the three months for which they were called out; and as to volunteers, they remain no longer than convenient.

the zeal and talents with which you have managed your command. Your conduct appears to me to have been extremely judicious and proper throughout; and your troops exhibit a state of improvement and subordination, which is at once honorable to their officers and themselves.

I am very sincerely

your friend and humble servant,

WM. HENRY HARRISON.

Brigadier-General Geo. M'Clure.

P. S. With regard to the inhabitants of the country, who have been taken up as spies, or for other causes, I have been in a great degree governed by the opinion of Col. Wilcox. I recommend the same course to you, unless you should discover that it leads to any improper result.

W. H. H.

FORT-GEORGE, Nov. 16, 1813.

My dear Sir,

I cannot suffer you to depart from this post, without expressing to you the great satisfaction I have received from our intercourse, and my extreme regret that its continuance has been so short. You carry with you, sir, the highest esteem and the warmest admiration of every officer and soldier under my command, who had any opportunity of forming an acquaintance with you. Your recommendations will meet with every attention and respect in my power; and I shall only regret, that you are not here yourself to execute them.

For the terms of approbation you have been pleased to use, in speaking of my conduct, I can tender you only my thanks.

With the warmest wishes for your health and

prosperity, and that of your officers, with whom
I have had the pleasure of an acquaintance,

I remain with the utmost respect,

Your friend and servant,

GEO. M'CLURE.

*Major-General Harrison,
New-Ark.*

*Extract of a letter to Governor Tompkins, dated
FORT-GEORGE, 16 Nov. 1813.*

Dear Sir,

The prospect of our contemplated movement against the enemy at Burlington, I am afraid is probably defeated, in consequence of the arrival yesterday of Commodore Chauncey and his fleet, with orders to General Harrison, from the Secretary at War, to embark immediately with his army for Sacket's Harbor. My letter to Gen. Harrison and his answer, (copies of which you will find under cover) will satisfy you, that the late call for volunteers was authorised and ordered by him.

It would be a fortunate circumstance if the enemy would retreat from Burlington-Heights; as, from the best information I can obtain, their force, in Regulars, Militia and Indians, are superior to mine. There are no better troops than those I have now on this side the strait. They are anxious to march out and attack the enemy. I will determine in a few days whether I shall or not.— At present Gen. Harrison will not give his consent.

In a former communication to your excellency, I observed that the term of service of the militia under my command would expire at a time not far distant, and that if no regular force should arrive to take their place, another draft would be indispensable. This the Secretary at War is apprised of, and will doubtless order some species

of troops to repair to these posts in due time. If he should not do so, or if you could not effect a detachment in time to relieve us, I think we could induce a portion of our troops to remain here a month, who might be sufficient to garrison this fort. From the nature of the subject I have submitted to your consideration, it is obvious that a prompt reply will be necessary.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,

GEO. M'CLURE.

His Excellency D. D. Tompkins.

FORT-GEORGE, 17 Nov. 1813.

Dear Sir,

General Harrison and his troops embarked yesterday on board our fleet, destined for Sacket's Harbor, leaving the command of this frontier once more in my hands. Owing to continued opposing winds the fleet yet remains in sight of this place.

The correspondence which took place between Gen. Harrison and myself, (copies of which are sent herewith) will at once explain to you my views and feelings on the subject of his departure, and relative to the contemplated operations on this frontier. I am confident that the expressions of regret made by General Harrison are equally sincere with mine.

About 400 volunteers have repaired to this post, under my late call made in conformity with the views and wishes of Gen. Harrison, and a few are still coming in. I shall take care that they shall not be unemployed. I am this moment sending out a detachment of 200 mounted men, with directions to penetrate the enemy's lines, as far as practicable with safety. I am making preparations for proceeding up the lake in force, and shall determine on the policy of putting such a plan in exe-

cution, on the return of the mounted men, whose report I am in hopes will justify it.

Accounts of the enemy's force vary very much. A deserter came in to-day, who states, that there remained at Burlington and Stoney-Creek, 1500 Regulars and 800 Indian warriors. It is impossible to form a correct opinion of their intended movements. At one time they appear to be sending down their stores and detachments of troops to York; but at this time they are re-enforcing, fortifying and building barracks. Your Excellency will judge of the necessity of sending on another force to supply the place of the troops now under my command, as you have already been apprised that their term of service will expire on the 9th of next month.

I have the honor to be

Your Excellency's obedient servant,
GEO. M'CLURE.

*The Hon. John Armstrong,
Secretary of War.*

EXTRACT, from the same to the same, dated
FORT-GEORGE, 21 Nov. 1813.

My mounted men have returned from the head of the lake, having proceeded within a short distance of the enemy's piquets at Stoney-Creek. Col. Wilcox, who commanded, reports, that from the best information he could collect, the enemy's force consisted of from 1200 to 1500 Regulars & 900 Indian warriors. They had discharged their teams, and apparently intend wintering at Stoney-Creek and Burlington. It would be very desirable to dislodge them from their present positions, but my force is insufficient for the purpose. At this inclement season, it might be attended with serious consequences to attempt any thing more than desultory excursions.

The volunteers who have lately come on, must be actively employed, or they will return to their homes. The drafted militia on this side of the river, are probably equal to any troops in the U. States. I regret that their term of service will expire so soon as the 9th of December.

Permit me to suggest the propriety of offering a small bounty to such of them as will volunteer for a longer time. Should I move with my troops towards the enemy, I cannot promise myself any advantages greater than destroying some mills contiguous to them, and bringing off a quantity of flour which is becoming scarce with us. The fleet sailed with Gen. Harrison on the 16th inst.

HEAD-QUARTERS, FORT-GEORGE, 22d Nov. 1813.

Dear Sir,

Major Allen informs me that you suggested to him, that with permission you would raise a party of men, and go to Long-Point. The proposition meets my approbation; I therefore authorise you to embark in the enterprise with all possible expedition, as I contemplate marching out with my forces in a few days against the enemy. It will draw his attention from that quarter, and free you from any surprise that you might otherwise be liable to. You are therefore clothed with discretionary power, either to carry away the public stores there, or destroy them. In the meantime, inform me by express, whenever I may be found, of your movements—as it may be in my power to assist you, if necessary, with a re-enforcement of mounted men.

In great haste, I remain, Dear Sir,

Your friend and servant,

GEO. M'CLURE.

Gen. Peter B. Porter, Black-Rock.

HEAD-QUARTERS, FORT-GEORGE, U. C.

Dec. 3d, 1813.

Sir—Deeming it necessary that I should make an excursion into the interior of this part of the province, with a view of giving confidence to the inhabitants, that we have the possession of the country, and the power to protect the well-disposed and overawe those who are inimical, I proceeded from this post on the 26th November, with a column of about 1300 Militia, mounted Volunteers and Indians, together with a detachment of regular artillerists, under the command of Capt. Leonard, and marched as far as the 20 mile Creek, having sent my mounted troops in advance, as far as the 40 mile Creek.

I have it from unquestionable authority, that the enemy have at Burlington Heights, about 1000 regulars, an equal number of Indians, together with their militia.—The regular force consists of the 100th reg't, the Royal Scots and remains of the 41st and 8th, under Vincent and Proctor. I have made every endeavor to draw the Indians who are on the British side, to a council with ours.—One of the enemy's Indians came in, with whom I transmitted the enclosed letter; I have not yet received their answer, but expect, if they possibly can, they will either join me or remain neutral—but it is necessary a force should be shown to give them confidence.

I herewith transmit you a more detailed account of my views, in an order which I issued on my return to this post, on the 29th. One object which I stated in the order alluded to above, respecting the expedition under Gen. Porter, was defeated by causes unknown to me at present;—but I presume the General found it more difficult to raise volunteers for that expedition than he had

imagined. His intention was to secure a considerable quantity of public property at Long-Point, consisting principally of flour.

I am placed at present, in a delicate situation.—The period for which the militia volunteered their services, having expired, and there not being more than 200 regular troops here, I am at a loss in what manner to act. The Indian force is at all times fluctuating.—I have at present, about 110—they have been paid off, and appear highly satisfied—I flatter myself, in a few weeks I shall have some hundreds of them, but in the intermediate period, the militia will return to their homes.

I should be happy to receive your orders for my future guidance. I have directed some of my most active officers to beat up for volunteers from the militia, for a short period, and have a prospect of getting about 200 to remain.—I offer them two dollars each, additional monthly pay.

I am happy in being able to state that the Indians behaved unusually well in our late excursion.—I do not believe that a single instance of their pillaging took place. Capt. Leonard was very active and industrious in preparing his Artillery for the expedition. Lieut. Frasier, of the 15th reg't. U. S. Infantry, who had just arrived, very handsomely volunteered as aid to me—whose zeal and services were daily appreciated. I also feel much indebted to Lt. Col. Wilcox, who with his mounted-men, scoured the country in advance of the army.

I have the honor to be
your obedient servant,

GEO. M'CLURE.

*His Excellency John Armstrong,
Secretary at War.*

FORT-NIAGARA, Dec. 10, 1813.

Sir—This day, found Fort-George left to be defended by only sixty effective regular troops, and probably forty volunteers. Within the last three days, the term of the militia service has been expiring—and they have recrossed the river, almost to a man. I had authorised some of my most active subalterns to raise companies of volunteers, for two months service—and offered a bounty of four dollars; and it is with regret, I have to say, that but few would volunteer for a longer time—probably thirty out of my brigade.

This day a scouting party of Canadian volunteers came in contact with a party of the enemy at 12 mile Creek, who advanced in sleighs, of which vehicles there were rising of thirty in number.—They took five of ours prisoners, and afterwards wantonly shot one, and delivered another to the fury of their savages. I have the most correct intelligence that the enemy are advancing in force.—Their movements determined me, this morning, in calling a council of the principal militia and regular officers remaining with me.—They all accorded in opinion, that Fort-George was not tenable with the remnant of force left in it; I in consequence gave orders for evacuating the Fort immediately after night set in, and have already brought over all the light cannon, and most of the ammunition, arms, camp-equipage, &c. I have notified the few scattered inhabitants who yet reside in New-Ark, to remove their persons and property. They have seasonably improved the time and notice, and before morning the village will be reduced to ashes. This step has not been resorted to without council, and is in conformity with the views of the Secretary of War, made known to me in a former communica-

tion. The enemy are now completely shut out from any hopes or means of wintering in the vicinity of Fort-George.

It is truly mortifying to me, that a part of the militia could not have been prevailed on to continue in service for a longer time ; but the circumstance of their having to live in tents at this inclement season, added to that of the pay-master's coming on only prepared to furnish them with one out of three months pay, has produced all the bad effects that can be imagined. The best and most subordinate militia, that have yet been on this frontier, finding they were to be discharged without receiving their pay, became, with some honorable exceptions, a disaffected & ungovernable multitude.

I am much surprised at not having received any answers to my frequent communications, on the subject of my future conduct respecting this frontier. Having received no instruction to govern me—the militia all returning to their homes, and no troops to supply their places—I am compelled to adopt the only alternative left me. I shall remain at this garrison myself, until I can hear from you or the Secretary of War. I have the honor to be your Excellency's obedient humble servant,

GEO. M'CLURE.

*His Excellency Daniel D. Tompkins,
Governor of New-York.*

GENERAL ORDERS.

NIAGARA, Dec. 11, 1813.

Lieut. Col. Grieves will proceed to Lewiston, with the remains of his regiment of Artillery.*—

* 80 men of this regiment volunteered their services for one month, for which they received a bounty of near \$500. After receiving the money, 50 or 60 of them deserted: the remainder, under major Bennet, defended the town, until they were overpowered by twenty times their number.

He will take with him two pieces of artillery, a 12 and 6 pounder, and shot of every description—plenty of round shot in particular. He will mount his artillery on the batteries of the river opposite Queenston, put his furnace in order, and on the appearance of the enemy in Queenston, he will commence a fire of hot shot on the town. He will mount a piquet guard every night at the upper and lower landings; and generally act with vigilance in watching the movements of the enemy, and give me information by express, as occasion may require. He will order his quarter-master to provide quarters in the village for the accommodation of his troops, and concentrate them as near as possible. He will call on the contractor, major Allen, to furnish rations.

Will give further orders to-morrow.

GEO. M'CLURE, *Brig. General,*
commanding.

AFTER GENERAL ORDER.

Gen. M'CLURE, being under the necessity of repairing to Buffalo, for the defence of that place and Black-Rock—Capt. Leonard will resume the command of Fort Niagara; and will, as soon as possible, have a proportion of hand grenades in the different block-houses, and give directions to the officers of the infantry where they should be posted, with their men, in case of attack. And should you not be able to maintain the out-works, you will repair to the block and mess houses, and have every thing arranged in such a manner as though you expected an immediate attack. Much is expected of Capt. Leonard, from his long experience, and knowledge of duty: and the General feels confident, he will be well supported by Capt.

Loomis of the artillery, and the officers of the infantry.

By order of the Brig. Gen. M'Clure,
DONALD FRASIER, *Lieut. 15th U. S. Infantry,*
and Volunteer Aid-de-Camp.

HEAD-QUARTERS, BUFFALO, 15 Dec. 1813.

Dear Sir,

The following is a copy of a letter written to the Secretary at War. Should it accord with your views, your co-operation in the measure will be indispensably necessary.—“It being a matter of the first moment to the interest of our government, that the Upper Province should be speedily wrested from the hands of the enemy, I am again induced to take the liberty of calling your early attention to that all-important subject. Permit me, sir, therefore to observe, that the whole of the enemy's force, from Fort Erie to York, does not exceed at this period, two thousand five hundred effective men, including regular troops, incorporated militia and Indians: and the information I daily receive, induces me to believe, that at least five hundred of that number are stationed at York.

This statement I know to be accurate; therefore have no hesitation to say, that if the Government see fit to furnish me with two thousand five hundred militia or Volunteers, and one thousand regular troops, with a sufficient number of sleighs to transport them to such places as I shall deem necessary, I will not leave a British soldier west of York by the last of February. It is an unfortunate circumstance, that General Harrison's army was ordered to Sacket's Harbor. Had we marched at that time against the enemy, the key to the upper country would now have been in our possession. It is also equally unfortunate,

that a detachment of militia was not made and ordered to Fort George before the term of service of the late detachment expired."

I have the honor to be, with perfect regard,
Your Excellency's most obed't servant,
GEO. M'CLURE.

His Excellency Daniel D. Tompkins.

*Extract of a letter from Gen. M'Clure to Secretary
Armstrong, dated Buffalo, 22 Dec. 1813.*

It is a source of extreme regret to me, to be under the necessity of announcing to you, the mortifying intelligence of the loss of Fort Niagara, about 4 o'clock on the morning of the 19th inst.—The enemy crossed the river at Five-mile Meadows, in considerable force, consisting of regulars, and Indians, who made their way to the garrison undiscovered; which, from the most correct information I could collect, was completely surprised. Our men were nearly all asleep in their tents. The enemy rushed in, and commenced a most horrid slaughter. Such as escaped the fury of the first onset, retired to the old mess-house—where they kept up a destructive fire on the enemy, until a want of ammunition compelled them to surrender. Although our force was very inferior, and comparatively small indeed, I am induced to think that the disaster is not attributable to want of troops, but to *gross neglect in the commanding officer of the Fort, Capt. Leonard*, in not preparing, being ready, and looking out for the expected attack.—I have not yet been able to ascertain the number of killed and wounded.

You will perceive, sir, by the inclosed General Orders, that I apprehended an attack, and made the necessary arrangements to meet it, but have reason to believe, from information received by

those who have made their escape, that the commandant did not in any respect, comply with those orders. On the same morning, a detachment of militia, under Maj. Bennet, stationed at Lewiston Heights, was attacked by a party of savages; but the Major and his little corps, by making a desperate charge, effected their retreat, after being surrounded by several hundred Indians, with the loss of 6 or 8, who doubtless were killed. The inoffensive inhabitants of Lewiston and Youngston, who could not make their escape, were, without regard to age or sex, inhumanly butchered, by savages led on by *British officers painted!* A British officer who was taken prisoner, acknowledges that many small children were murdered by the Indians.

I had, myself, three days previous to the attack on Niagara, left it with a view of providing for the defence of this place, and Black-Rock, and the other villages on this frontier.—I came here without troops, and have called out the militia of Genesee, Niagara and Chatauque, en masse.

—o—o—

Letter from Gen. McClure to the Secretary at War.
BATAVIA, Dec. 25, 1813.

Sir—It is a notorious fact, that on the night on which Niagara was taken, Capt. Leonard was much intoxicated, and left the Fort about eleven o'clock P. M.—I am assured that he has since given himself up to the enemy, and that he and his family are now on the Canadian side of the straits. The circumstance of his not effecting his escape when in his power, strengthens me in a suspicion that there was a secret understanding with regard to this disgraceful transaction.

Permit me to suggest to you, sir, that unless regular troops are sent to this frontier immediately,

the enemy will penetrate into the interior of our country, and lay waste all before them.

One thousand regulars, with an equal number of militia, will be no more than sufficient for the protection of this frontier; but it will require at least 5000 men to drive the enemy round the lake, and to enable us to take possession of Burlington Heights.

It is a serious misfortune that you have hitherto been so much deceived, as to the enemy's intention and force at Burlington and York, and that troops were not sent on in time to take the place of the detached militia, who occupied Ft's George and Niagara, before the expiration of their term of service. You will perceive, sir, by adverting to all my former communications, that my statement relative to the force of the enemy, was correct—and that I urged in the strongest terms, the necessity of making timely provision for the defence of the frontier.

I am charged, by our internal enemies, and the ignorant part of the community, of being the chief cause of all the disaster that has happened; which will, I trust, plead a sufficient apology for my publications on this subject—conscious of having done my duty, as far as the public means afforded me, would extend. The promotion of the views of Government, and the cause of my country, were the only inducement for me to sacrifice my private interest. It is in your power, sir, to do me justice, and satisfy the public.

At my request, Major Gen. Hall will take the command of the volunteers at Buffalo, while I organize the detached militia, as they arrive at this place—will assign the command to the senior, Col. Davis, and give him the necessary instructions—after which, I will visit my family, and wait

for further orders. In the mean time, it is proper to mention, that I resign my command, unless an equal proportion of regular troops is sent here.

I have the honor to be your obedient servant,
GEO. M'CLURE.

Gen. John Armstrong,
Secretary at War.

From Governor Tompkins to General M'Clure.

ALBANY, Nov. 26, 1813.

Sir—You will herewith receive the copy of a requisition, this day made, by the Secretary of the War Department, for garrisoning F'ts Niagara and George during the winter. The request, you will perceive, is that—'I authorise you to garrison them;—by which you will understand that you are to remain in service, and to organize and command the necessary force, until in your own opinion, your presence shall become unnecessary, or until further orders in that respect, may be received.

You are hereby authorised to invite and accept volunteers, for three or four months, for the purpose specified in the Secretary's requisition; and if volunteers cannot be procured, you are at liberty to fill the blank in, and issue the inclosed order, for Gen. Hall to detach from his division, the balance of troops required, over and above volunteers.

It is perhaps, proper for me to observe for your government in the affair, that should the British evacuate Burlington, as we believe they have done, or will do shortly, the number of men competent to garrison the F'orts, will be inconsiderable; and I desire that your proceedings under this order, may be principally regulated by the authentic information you may obtain from that quarter.

It gives me great satisfaction to assure you, the whole of your conduct, since you were called into service, has met the marked approbation of the Secretary of War and myself.

With great esteem,

I am, dear sir,

your obedient servant,

DANIEL D. TOMPKINS.

Gen. Geo. M'Clure.

P. S. As the garrison force will not be called upon to perform any other duty than that of mere protection to our frontier, I have sufficient confidence in the patriotism of the western district, to believe that a competent number of volunteers will offer for that purpose. Let me hear from you as soon as possible.

NOTE.—This letter and the following requisition came to hand by mail, on the 10th Dec. several days after the militia had started for their respective homes. The reader will see that I had to send the requisition one hundred and twenty miles, to the Major Gen. of Division—and he could not detach and march to this frontier, the number required, under four or five weeks. Knowing this to be the case, I urged, as you will perceive by my communications to the Secretary at War, the necessity of making timely provision.

From the Secretary at War to Governor Tompkins.

(COPY.)

26 November, 1813.

Sir—Let me request you to authorise General M'Clure to garrison Forts George and Niagara, in the event of Gen. Harrison's leaving the Niagara frontier for Sacket's Harbor.*

* Look at the inconsistency of this requisition—"in the event of Gen. Harrison's leaving the Niagara frontier for Sacket's Harbor," after sending Com. Chauncey, with his whole fleet, three weeks before, for Gen. Harrison's army! But perhaps the order to Gen. Harrison, was similar to that for the destruc-

Should the enemy abandon Burlington Heights, as appears to be their intention, the garrisons need not be large. Much will depend on the character of the officer left in command. To Col. Fleming it might be safely committed. His experience and other valuable qualities fit him well for it. The garrison may be composed either of volunteers or drafted militia ; but of whatever description, it is desirable that their term of service should be more than one month. Let me hear from you on this subject, so soon as General M'Clure shall inform you of his arrangements.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your ob't. servant,

[Signed] J. ARMSTRONG.

Gov. Tompkins.

Copy of a letter to Major Gen. John Vincent.

HEAD-QUARTERS, American Army,
on the Niagara frontier,

BUFFALO, Dec. 22, 1813.

Sir—It is a painful duty which devolves on me, of reminding you of your departure from the laws of honorable warfare, and the forfeited pledge of a soldier's word, which should be sacred, and has been held so, with unadulterated savages.

You will well remember the assurance given General Harrison, that you would restrain the savages under your command, from committing those depredations and wanton massacres, which were made the subject of complaint, in the correspondence to which I allude.

tion of New Ark. Gen. Harrison is an honorable man—and I have his word for it, that the order was positive—although the Secretary declared to me, in a subsequent communication, that the order was discretionary, and altogether a matter of arrangement between Harrison and Chauncey. When he sent for Gen. Harrison's troops—that would have been the time to have furnished me with a requisition.

In fulfilling that promise, I would direct your view to the desolated village of Lewiston—the wanton massacres of unoffending and unresisting citizens—men, women and children, deliberately butchered in cold blood, by your savage allies, and under your eye.

The blood of those citizens calls for vengeance—and I am actually constrained to declare, that hereafter, it will be my duty, in imitation of your barbarous policy, to yield to war, all its horrors, by retaliating those wrongs which you have so wantonly inflicted.

I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,

GEO. M'CLURE, *Brig. Gen.*
com'g Niagara Frontier.

Maj. Gen. John Vincent, com'g
British forces, U. Canada.

General Drummond in reply, says—

“That some excesses were committed, he admits, and sincerely laments.—At the same time, he has the satisfaction of knowing, that every effort was made, and every exertion used, by Brig. Gen. Ryal, and the officers and soldiers of the British force under his command, to restrain the excesses. You, sir, however, cannot be aware of the difficulty, or rather the impossibility of effectually controlling an infuriated band of savages. Major Gen. Ryal, and the officers under his orders, did, however, afford effectual protection to all who remained in their houses.—A British soldier, a sentinel, lost his life in defending a female, an inhabitant of Lewiston.”

In the same letter, Gen. Drummond calls Gen. M'Clure to an account for the destruction of New Ark—in reply to which, the following is a copy :

HEAD-QUARTERS, American Army,
BUFFALO, Dec. 22, 1813.

Sir—Your communication, dated York, Dec. 14, has been received, and I have only to state, in reply, that I am only accountable to my government for any act or procedure of mine, while commanding. As it respects the atrocity of the act of burning New-Ark, (as you are pleased to call it) you will certainly admit, it is not without a precedent. I need only remind you of the destruction of Havre-de-Grace, French-Town, Sodus, &c. &c. long previous to the late conflagration of New-Ark. Should Lieut. Gen. Drummond require a more explicit answer, he will please to present his communications through some other source, to the American government.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,
GEO. M'CLURE.

*Lieut. Gen. Drummond,
com'g British forces, &c.*

WAR-OFFICE, Feb. 8, 1813.

ORDERED, that Capt. Leonard (1st regiment of artillery) be arrested, and that his place be supplied by Capt. Armistead, of the same regiment.

(Signed,) JOHN ARMSTRONG.

Adj't Gen. Cushing.

NOTE.—This is the order to which I allude in my narrative. Leonard was not arrested agreeable to this order, and the Secretary knew it, and suffered him to continue in the command of so important a post as Niagara, without giving me a hint of his suspicions.

REMARKS.

I shall now take a retrospective view of the whole, and point out the many chances the militia under my command, had, while on the Niagara frontier, of signalizing themselves and of rendering essential services to their country—and the causes which robbed them of that glory, which a grateful people are always willing to bestow upon a victorious band of Patriots.

And first, it will be seen, that those patriotic sons of liberty entered Canada voluntarily, and cheerfully, before the departure of Gen. Wilkinson's army, with a full expectation of being led against the enemy. Here they were disappointed, and their expectations for the first time blasted, by the impotent plans of the Secretary at War, and his commanding General. The regular forces "were to be reserved for a greater purpose." To what better purpose could his army be employed, than the destruction of 3000 of the enemy, that lay penning him up, for a whole season, in Fort-George? It was a glorious opportunity, and none more favorable, could have offered, for paving the way for the subjugation of the Upper Province. Vincent and his 3000 men, were suffered to escape from certain death or annihilation, which inevitably would have been the consequence, had our commander been permitted to march out of his entrenchment against them. Vincent must have been a novice to expose himself, so near, to the claws of the Eagle, unless he had foreseen that her "*scratches*" were harmless.

2d. The next chance which offered, was on the arrival of Gen. Harrison with his army. A fire for conquest began to kindle in the breast of

every militia-man. The brave and prudent Gen. Harrison was hailed with acclamations of joy.—Immediately our plan of co-operation was set on foot: by our united exertions, we had determined on the destruction of the enemy, at the heights of Burlington.—For that purpose, many of the brave men of the western district, had volunteered their services. The most implicit confidence was placed in the zeal and abilities of General Harrison, and very justly.—He had become a terror to his majesty's beloved allies, the savages. Their barbarous chief, Proctor, would have taken care to keep at an awful distance.—He knew that retributive justice awaited him, for all the excesses and cruel barbarities which had been committed on defenceless prisoners of war, in violation of the rules of civilized warfare.—But our enlightened secretary must have seen his very perilous and dangerous situation, and agreeably to the dictates of the good book, he exercised "*mercy*" instead of "*sacrifice*," by wisely providing ways and means for his escape, in ordering Gen. Harrison's army to Sacket's-Harbor.

The arrival of Chauncey's fleet, for Harrison's troops, at the moment when we had matured our plans of marching against the enemy, threw the militia and volunteers into such a rage, that, had Armstrong appeared amongst them at that time, he would have felt the force of their indignation. Those who are acquainted with that description of troops, will be able to form some idea of their feelings and conduct.

Here endeth the 2d chapter of the Secretary's folly, and second chance of saving our country.

3d. The next opportunity that offered was about the time the term of service of the drafted militia was expiring, when the Canadians between York

and the bay of Cauty, offered to join us with nearly their whole population, provided I would supply them with arms, munitions of war, a detachment of troops, and transportation across the lake.

Here again was I defeated; the Secretary took good care that I should not have an opportunity of injuring any of his majesty's subjects, in arms against us, or of relieving those who were friendly to our cause—we were not allowed to be instrumental in the promotion of that cause, which was dear to every true American. No succour, or troops of any description, were ordered to our relief. I was ordered to remain on the frontier, without men or money—stationed on the heights of Lewiston like a *stool-pidgeon*, with my feet confined, and my eyes blinded—a prey to the vultures of Canada, and the clamors and abuse of a misinformed public. Had I been possessed of the power of a Sampson, I might have been equal to a contest with the enemy, single-handed; as it would have been no difficult matter to have provided a Sampson's weapon. But the Philistines discovered that my head had been shaved, my hands and feet shackled, and I become as other men, and consequently fell upon me before my hair began to sprout.

But I have done with this plain and ungarnished statement of facts. It is for the public to pass the final sentence. They are the proper tribunal.—I never have, nor ever shall, deceive the public by anonymous publications. I do not profess to have much talent for writing. Let it suffice that I know enough for the purpose of stating facts, which shall always be sanctioned by my signature.

I shall probably give great offence to my opponent, the late Secretary—Be it so—For his mis-

conduct, have I been abused.—He refused to do me justice—and I have been sacrificed on the altar of public opinion. [Personal attacks, however, beyond the law, every man is liable to—and as to danger within the law, I am not guilty enough to fear any. The good opinion of all the world, none can obtain; that of worthy men, I hope I shall never forfeit; that of Gen. Armstrong and his friends, I may wish I possessed—yet if I have it not, I shall be sorry, but not miserable in the want of it.

In reply to all the abuse I have suffered on account of the burning of the broken and deserted hovels that served only to barrack the enemy's troops in New-Ark—I have only to observe, that Gen. Harrison has often publicly and privately approved that act—all military men, who knew the situation of the two armies, will forever approve it—Secretary Armstrong would assuredly have had me cashiered if I had not done it—and taking all these facts into view, I am resolved, while I respect the opinions of sensible men, to suffer the shafts of slander to pass me with tolerable tranquillity.

APPENDIX.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE BEST MODE OF ORGANIZATION AND DISCIPLINE

OF

MILITIA.

Twenty-four years experience and observation as a military officer, induce me to submit the following remarks, in relation to the introduction of those military acquirements, which, in a republican government, it is so essential to possess. The subject has been often recommended to the consideration of our national Legislature, but never acted upon. Many lengthy reports, and learned disquisitions on this subject have been submitted; none of which, that have come to my knowledge, were calculated to improve the present system, or render this pretended bulwark of our nation effectual for its defence.

In a free government, it is evident that the only adequate and safe defence, against the ambition of rival or avaricious powers, is in the virtue and patriotism of its citizens. No tyranny ever yet reared its head, or (if it did) existed for any time, when military habits were the habits of the nation at large. On the contrary, wherever a nation deserted, or was compelled to forego its military

habits, there the tyrant grew and flourished—whether in the form of an emperor, king, or (if you please) a President. It is therefore evident, that in the present state of mankind, there is no national safety, but in a military habit generally extended among the whole body of the People. Every citizen of the United States is conversant with the use of fire-arms; and the use of the rifle is as necessary in many parts for the support of families, as that of the plough, ax, or any other implement of husbandry. Nevertheless, a knowledge of tactics is rare; discipline is attended to in a few states only—in none is it brought to an useful degree of perfection—a very diminutive proportion of militia are supplied with arms, and the best but partially.

The policy of our government is defensive.—It ought not to admit aggressions; but should spurn every idea of tame submission to foreign tyranny, or the invasion of our territory: and to be able for defence, every citizen of America must acquire a knowledge of those arts, by which ambition trains and disciplines its powers, in order to be competent to resist and repel them. It is of some moment to consider the importance of military knowledge. On this depends the lives and property of every citizen. The excellence of military institutions—the discipline, and minute perfection of tactics, are as indispensable as patriotism and valor.—My object, therefore, in introducing the following skeleton of a plan of organization and discipline to the public, is to render the subject equally familiar, useful, and intelligible to all—which is respectfully submitted to the consideration of the National Legislature.

And first, it will be necessary that the militia should be divided into two or more classes; that

officers be selected and commissioned ; that the officers and non-commissioned officers of each division be called into actual service, and perform camp duty, say two months in the year—one in the spring, and one in the fall ; that one or more officers who are capable, be appointed and assigned to each division, for the purpose of instructing them—who will report semi-annually to the Adjutant-General of each state ; that for this service, the officers shall receive half-pay and the non-commissioned officers and musicians, full pay, while so encamped, together with allowance for transportation, subsistence, &c. unless provided by the U. States. The officers, non-commissioned officers and staff of a division consisting of four brigades, will form a corps equal to a regiment of one thousand men ; this regiment, so formed, will consist of ten companies of 100 men each, 8 of which, infantry, and two flank companies of riflemen. This body of troops will be sufficiently large, to enable their chief to perform any evolution or manœuvre of a larger body. That one annual training of the whole militia, by regiments, for one day only, shall be ordered, more for the purpose of ascertaining their strength, and inspection of arms, than improvement in tactics. That arms and accoutrements complete, be provided for the whole body of the militia, and deposited in arsenals within the bounds of each regiment, under the care of armorers.

Every evolution and movement of an army, depends upon the discipline and military skill of officers and non-commissioned officers. Hence will be seen the necessity of their acquiring a competent knowledge of their duty in the first place, which is impossible to obtain by the present regulations.—Consequently the choice and in-

struction of officers, is the point on which the reputation and importance of an army must depend. Therefore every person who may be concerned in the appointment, should consider himself as responsible to his country for a proper choice, and should any be found deficient in the acquirement of military knowledge, after a fair trial, they ought to be reported and dismissed.

Thirty days is sufficient to instruct a private soldier in the knowledge of the part which he is required to perform. The frequent trainings of militia answers no valuable purpose—and the present state of the militia, as far as it relates to discipline and military concert, is in fact a state of disorganization. Officers being so ignorant of their duty, will neither command respect or obedience. They are no better informed now, than they were 20 years ago, (a few light companies excepted.) It will be argued by many who are unacquainted with the subject; that it is impossible to discipline a soldier in thirty days, but it is unquestionably true, and experience has taught me this fact. The duty and discipline of a private soldier, is very simple and easily acquired—the elementary part must first be taught. The soldier is first taught how to stand firmly, and in an easy military position; next he is taught the facings; next to step forward a given number of inches, until his habit of marching is confirmed in the length of pace. A thorough knowledge of pace and cadence, or musical time, forms the basis of all the most celebrated tactics of ancient and modern times. The uniformity of movement under all circumstances, is also the basis of discipline. The principal and only effectual parts of the manual exercise, are those which go into action; they are the priming, loading and firing

fixing and charging bayonet: all other motions are only for convenience, respect or parade, and may be dispensed with or taught at leisure. And lastly, silence and subordination, which are the fruits of wholesome discipline.

The celebrated Marshal Saxe says, that all military discipline depends on the legs, and that he who thinks otherwise is a novice. I shall admit the Marshal's doctrine—after the soldier is taught the use of arms. All movements of battalion, regiment or larger body of men, depend upon the precision and correctness of pivots and guides.—Hence will be seen the correctness of the observation, that an army is compared to a machine, and is moved and moveable at the will of the commander. The instruction, therefore, of non-commissioned officers in the first place, who generally act as pivots and guides, is indispensable—and they should be taught a knowledge of their duty with the officers.—By this means, proper materials will be furnished and selected for promotion.

Hence it will be seen, that after the officers and non-commissioned officers are instructed in their duty, the U. States may in 30 days, if occasion requires, call into the field of action an army of upwards of one million effective and disciplined troops—whence the nation may be supplied with men whose all depends upon the success and prosperity of their country—and the embarrassment, difficulty, detail and uncertainty, which attends drafting, and which too often distracts the commanding officer, will be avoided. Let a system something like this be carried into effect, and the United States would be equal to all the rest of the world united.

The vigor and impotence of the proposed plan, will entirely depend on the laws relative thereto.

Unless the laws shall be equal to the object, and rigidly enforced, no energetic national militia can be established. If the majesty of the laws should be preserved inviolate, the operations of the proposed plan would foster a glorious public spirit, infuse the principles of energy and stability in the body politic, and give an high degree of political splendor to the national character.

I cannot conceive that any aspect, however pacific, which the governments of Europe may for the present have assumed towards this country, should be used as an argument to procrastinate for a day, any measures calculated to render their future hostility abortive. There is no real friendship existing in the breasts of the tyrants of Europe, for a government which is founded on principles so opposite to theirs, and which, by the happiness it diffuses, affords an eternal reproach upon their conduct. Whatever security there may be derived from their policy, none can certainly be expected from their forbearance, whenever, from circumstances, they may think proper to change their policy. It is therefore an incumbent duty on the national Legislature to prepare in due time for the worst. The liberties of the U. States must be preserved as they were won, by the arms, the discipline and valor of her citizens.

In the adoption of the above plan it will be seen that, in cases of necessity, an army may be formed of citizens, whose previous knowledge of discipline will enable them to proceed to an immediate accomplishment of the designs of the U. S. instead of exhausting the public resources, by wasting whole years in preparing to face the enemy.

The wisdom of the states will be manifested by inducing the most meritorious officers of the late

American army to accept appointments in the militia. The high degree of military knowledge which many of them possess, was acquired at too great a price, and is too precious to be buried in oblivion—it ought to be cherished and rendered permanently beneficial to the community.

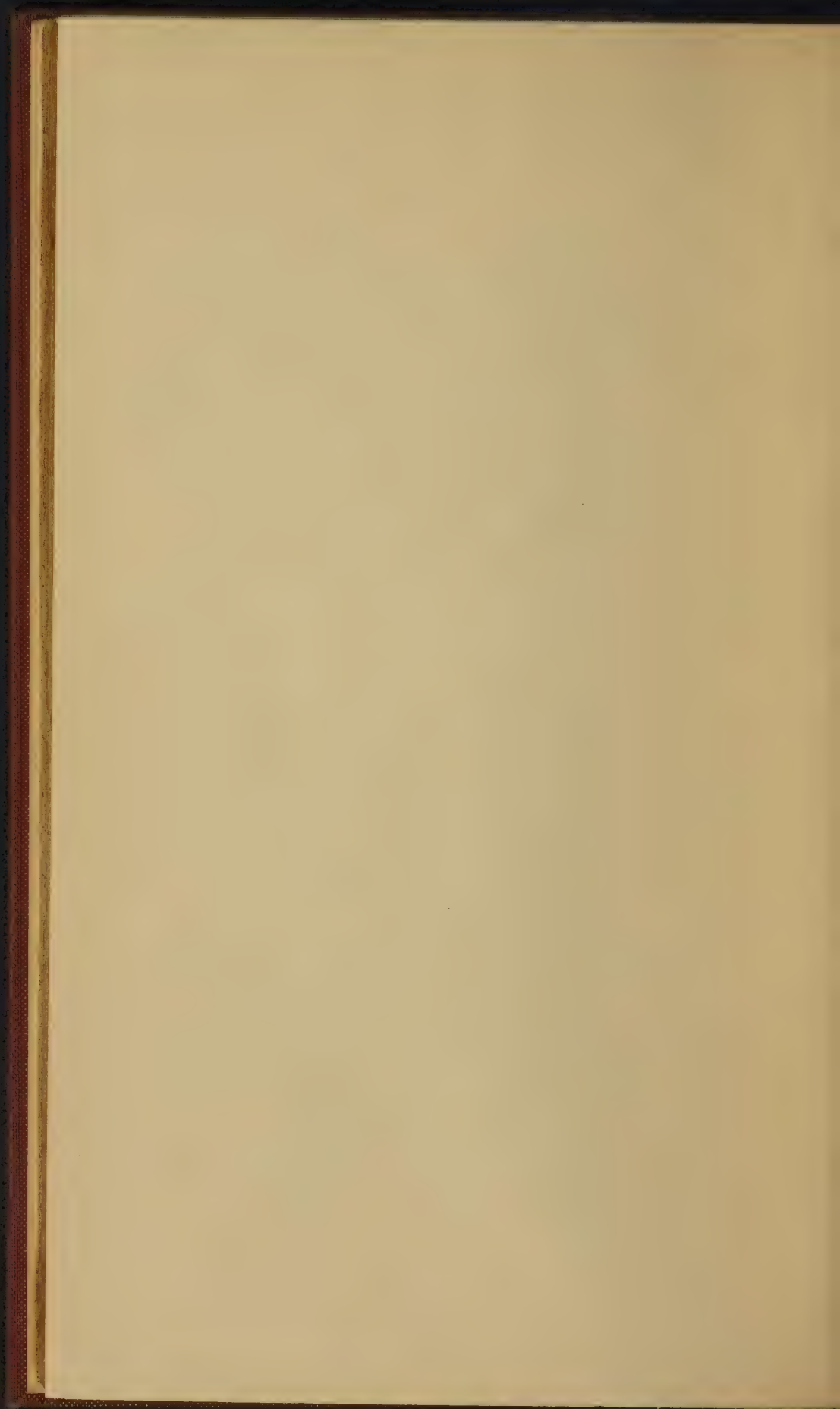
Whenever it may be necessary to call into service any class of militia, either for defence or conquest, I would recommend transferring the officers from the brigades to which they were commissioned, to others, until their tour of duty is performed, which ought not to be less than six months, if required.—The reason for this transfer is obvious to every military man, without comment. When a second class is called out into service, they ought to be encamped one month for the purpose of instructing them, before they are required to act against the enemy, or relieve the former class. By this means privates will have time to acquire a thorough knowledge of their duty—and in a few months of war, the militia of the United States will be equal to the best standing troops.—And I will hazard the assertion, that a soldier will acquire a better knowledge of his duty, under good officers, in thirty days, than he otherwise would, by attending trainings, agreeable to our present militia laws, for a century.—You may call this a conscript law if you please—there is no other practicable mode of disciplining militia effectually. Bonaparte created large armies of well disciplined troops, in less than a month—armies which taught lessons to the nations of Europe, never to be forgotten.

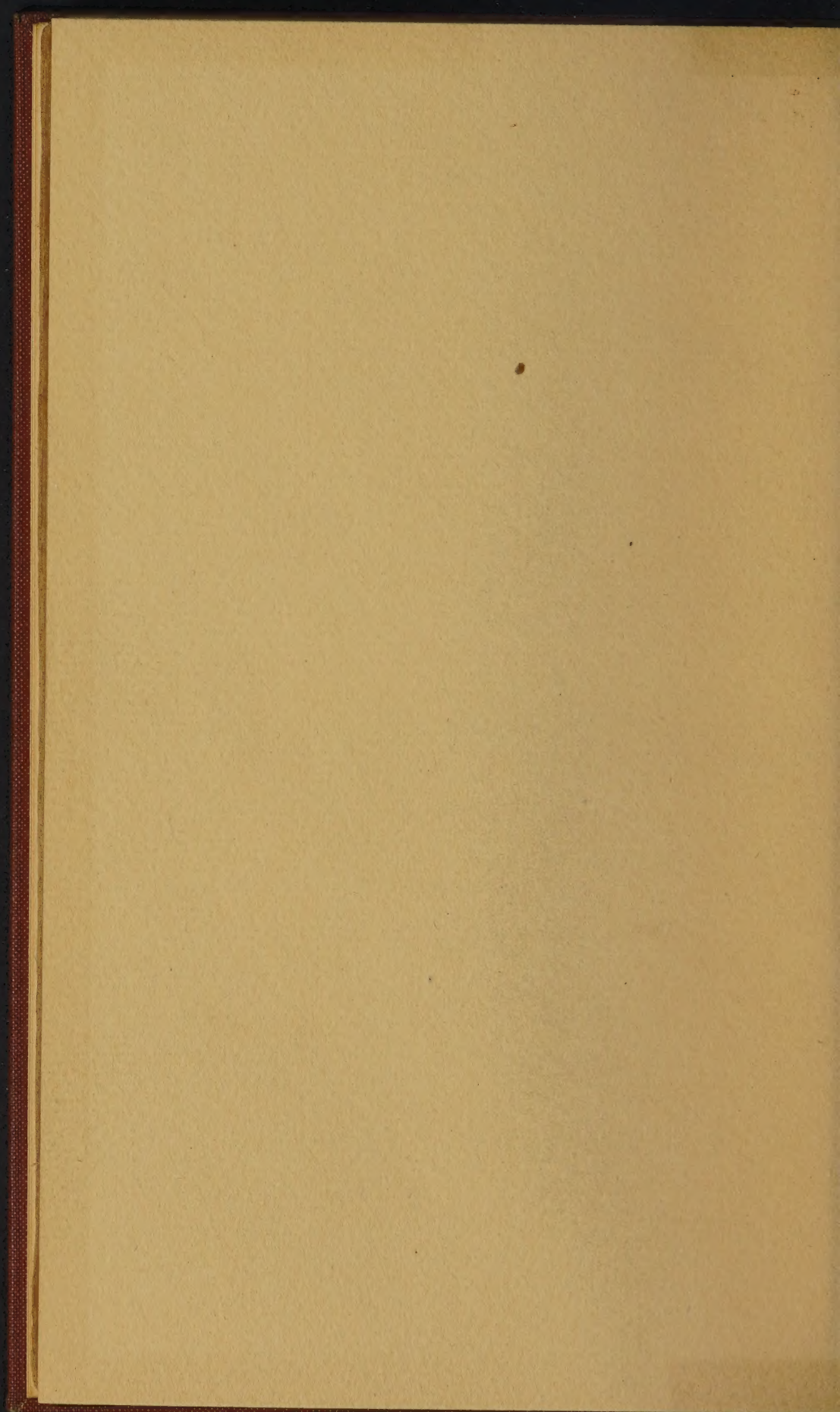
A proportion of at least one fifth part of the militia, ought to be organized into rifle corps and pike-men, formed in three ranks, the front and second rank riflemen, and the rear rank pike-men,

armed with pikes twelve feet long, and a brace of rifle pistols, or a light fusee carried in a sling.—The rear rank thus armed, would give full confidence to the front, and guard them against surprise, or charge of cavalry or Indians.*

The use of rifle-men was demonstrated and soon improved upon by those European officers, who had, by being allies or enemies in the contest which gave birth or emancipation to the people of the United States, witnessed their effect. The dangers from Indians and wild beasts of the forest, were the first incentives to expertness, and the causes of skill in the use of the rifle. The youth of America, the moment he is able to pull a trigger, is educated to the sports of the field or forest. Hence Americans have become by nature and practice, the best marksmen in the world, which gives them confidence and courage; for they know their antagonist must fall, if within their accustomed distance. The utility, therefore, of rifle corps in a wooden country, is very obvious, and ought to be encouraged.

* For the best mode of disciplining them, see Col. Duane's Military Library, vol. 2.





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